



THE  
GREAT MODERN PAINTERS

AMATEURS EDITION

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THE  
GREAT MODERN PAINTERS

ENGLISH, FRENCH, GERMAN, etc.

MEDALLISTS OF SUCCESSIVE UNIVERSAL EXPOSITIONS

STEEL-PLATES IN COLORS

TEXT

By the Principal Art-Critics



PARIS

GOUPIL & C<sup>o</sup>

1884





## PREFACE



Those who have wandered in the Dresden Art-gallery will remember their enjoyment of that choice collection, and how agreeable it was to find the pictures grouped together in small rooms where they could be quietly and intimately enjoyed. Looking back after a continental journey the traveller's recollection of this Gallery is not blurred but is often the clearest and richest, in the memory, of those visited. There are many choice pictures in the Dresden museum, but I believe to the agreeable arrangement of the collection is due much of the charm and the distinctly defined after-day recollection amongst the many, many museums through which they have wandered.

This exquisite collection of choice artists, in the work of great modern painters, reminds me of one of those enjoyable rooms in the Dresden gallery where you can feast your eyes without the trouble of searching among the mediocre and rubbish of art, for here the best is selected and bound together. True one likes to make his own choice but often time and opportunity are lacking. Did you ever arrive in Paris during the last days of the annual "Salon" when there was not time to pick out the choice works amongst the thousands of canvases great and small, each having its own intrinsic or artistic value, but like a crowd in the street bewildering and uninteresting as a mass. Several years ago I made such a visit to the *Salon* and it was a pleasure to find, on the landing of the grand staircase, a friend who linking his arm in mine conducted me

through the freshly sprinkled rooms, from one picture to another. My friend had done the Salon thoroughly. His first visit had been on the morning of varnishing day, and as we passed through room after room he pointed out the sensational pictures that had attracted on that day; then he had visited the place on Sunday, the free day, and had the Sunday successes to show me; in each room there was something to which he directed my attention: excellent, good, or indifferent, something to tell about them, what the crowd had said, what had been written in the papers and what the artists thought. As I was led willingly along I felt as if I was turning over, with my companion, the pages of some huge volume, sometimes stopping at some finely embellished page and then only catching glimpses of others as they slipped rapidly through the fingers.

In this collection are comprised twenty-four names that are famous in the history of modern art: Bouguereau whose immense knowledge of drawing and composition has helped to develop the natural talent, taste and sentiment that has made his art so popular and that appeals to all lovers of the beautiful. Joseph Israëls, poet and painter, who gives us with his brush as with his pen the poetry of the Dutch peasant life, often sad in his choice of subject and sentiment but always charming in color and depth of pathos.

Alma-Tadema, the Belgian, naturalized English, who gives us those wonderful Grecian pictures, with temples of pure marble and exquisite frescos peopled with the rich natures of that softer clime; Paul Baudry who decorated the new Opera house at Paris with frescos that rivalled in attraction the wonderful staircase of the architect Garnier, Baudry who is indisputably one of the most wonderful talents of the age; Rosa Bonheur, whose portrait, painted years ago by Dubufe, is known as a young woman with a portfolio under one arm while the other leans upon the neck of a shapely bull, but who now should be portrayed as a handsome gray-haired woman. She who commenced her artistic career by painting rabbits and goats that she kept upon the housetop, and who now makes life size studies of the king of beasts from a cage of lions in her park near the Fontainebleau forest.

Amongst the collection we find Meissonier, the great painter of small pictures, where nothing but the dimension of the canvas is small, for the art of his pictures is large and treated in such a manner that should they ever

be reproduced on life size canvases they would not lose in their conception or breadth of treatment. Once I read a newspaper criticism of some local exhibition in a distant town that commenced "The most important, the largest picture in the exhibition is, " — and I wondered, if there had been a Meissonier in the collection would the critic, considering its diminutive size consider it worthy of his distinguished attention. And there is Hans Makart who luxuriates in large canvases, a wealth of color representing handsome women, richly attired nobles and all the paraphernalia of the courts of olden times: Knaus who knows so well how to touch the sad or gay cord of sentiment in our natures, with his stories upon canvas of German home life, be it of a wedding or a funeral, or only a little child who has been turned out into the back garden to eat his afternoon lunch, pestered by a homely flock of geese.

Then there is Leon Bonnat, the popular portrait painter and master of many successful artists. And the master Gérôme figures in this volume with many illustrations from his perfectly composed and correctly drawn works. Gérôme who has been a professor at l'École des Beaux-Arts for twenty years where he has given his time and talent to the education of a generation of painters many of whom have graduated long since and are now almost as well known as the master; while he the master is still patiently explaining to another generation the same artistic principles and laws that, by following, have made his earlier pupils successful; for although many of Gérôme's pupils have departed, in style and sentiment, from following the work of the master, the thorough education they received while under his tuition has given them a firm foundation, in substantial rules and laws, for the building up of new theories. Frederic Bridgman the successful American, successful in Paris the art center of the world where his talent was nurtured and matured. Stevens, Henner, Munkacsy and so on through the entire list of names each representing individual talent that has made its possessor famous and world renowned, and whose works have given abundant pleasure to the art loving public.

This is really a history of the contemporary art of those painters who held the foremost rank in the last Paris international exhibition and who carried off the honors in competition with the artistic world. Forming no clique or especial school of painting, each pursuing a method and talent all his own, differing as they do they are drawn together as contemporaries

holding prominent positions in the art world of the period; where art occupies so large a place in the interest of the public, who have learned to make it enjoyable and useful in the most intimate relations of their home life.

The present work is prepared in Paris, by the celebrated art publishers, Messrs Goupil and Company, who have given their special attention to the illustrations, with text written by well known art critics. The illustrations are either from photogravure plates printed in delicate tints, softer and more agreeable than the usual commonplace impressions, or fac-similes from pen and ink drawings that, like the hand-writing of an author, is interesting to art lovers and connoisseurs. The whole forming as I have suggested a choice collection, prepared with great care, perfect reproductions of the originals, and enjoyable as they show what is the individual art of the masters forming this volume, and allowing the reader to judge the merit of each contributor's esprit and composition.

Paris, 1884.

HENRY BACON





## W. BOUGUEREAU



William-Adolphe Bouguereau was born at La Rochelle in 1825. The extreme modesty of his family's fortune did not permit him any leisure or hesitation in the choice of a career, he was obliged, in spite of his natural taste for fine arts, to accept while still very young, a small appointment that enabled him to support himself. But as he did not abandon his artist's dreams he assiduously followed a drawing class, such as are held evenings in almost all the cities of France. Although he could devote but a small portion of his time to his favorite studies he soon became the best draughtsman in his class, and after having spent some time at Bordeaux, he came to Paris and placed himself under the direction of Picot.

The atelier of Picot was then extremely popular, notwithstanding the



estimable talent that all recognise as belonging to this artist, his reputation was based less upon his own paintings, than upon his school that had sent forth numerous eminent painters. Picot was considered an excellent professor, not only on account of the zeal which he showed in inspecting his pupil's work, but also because of the extreme liberty he granted them to

follow their own taste absolutely. Bouguereau was one who searched independently, gifted with a methodic mind and iron will he early found the line he wished to follow, and did not swerve from it afterwards. He always kept at an equal distance between the impatient who from excess of ardor throw themselves into the contest before their studies are terminated; and those who follow their master's word docilely without trying to understand for themselves.

Bouguereau, an indefatigable worker by nature as much as by method, made very successful studies that obtained for him the *prix de Rome* in 1850 at the same time as Paul Baudry; for, that year there where two grand prizes awarded. The subject for the concours was "Zénobie trouvée sur les bords de l'Araxe". The two laureates set out together for Rome and it was at the Villa Médicis that the germs of a friendship was contracted that has ever since continued to strengthen. The French Academy is considered by some of the french laureates as a charming sejour where they can rest themselves after their late exertions. The place imparted life and vigor to Bouguereau here his talent was raised

by incessant work; his envoi of his last year there, representing "Le corps de sainte Cécile apporté dans les catacombes", revealed all the strength and power of his prior studies.

This composition impregnated with a profound sadness is developed under a low arcade where the faithful are descending the saint's body which rests on a bed of palms. The picturesque effect, which is ordinarily

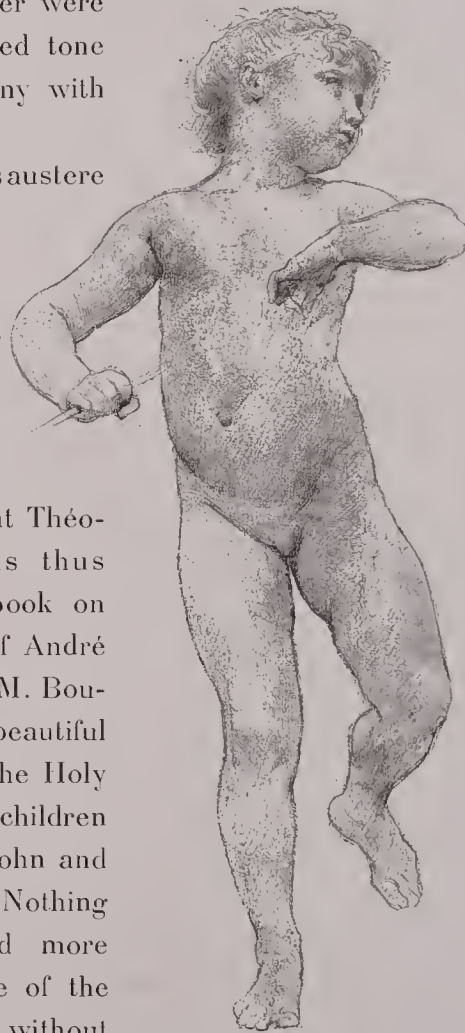


produced when the light penetrates by a narrow opening in a vaulted chamber, was a danger for the artist who might have allowed himself to

be entrained to produce a telling effect but incompatible with the gravity of the subject. Sacrificing everything to the impression of contemplation that he desired to produce M. Bouguereau kept his picture in a very quiet key and thus evaded discordant vividness. The pale head of saint Cecilia forms the luminous centre of the composition, and the personages surrounding her were painted in a subdued tone perfectly in harmony with the subject.

At the side of this austere canvas, M. Bouguereau sent to the Exhibition of 1855 another painting of an absolutely different character which he called "l'Amour fraternel", and that Théophile Gautier has thus described in his book on

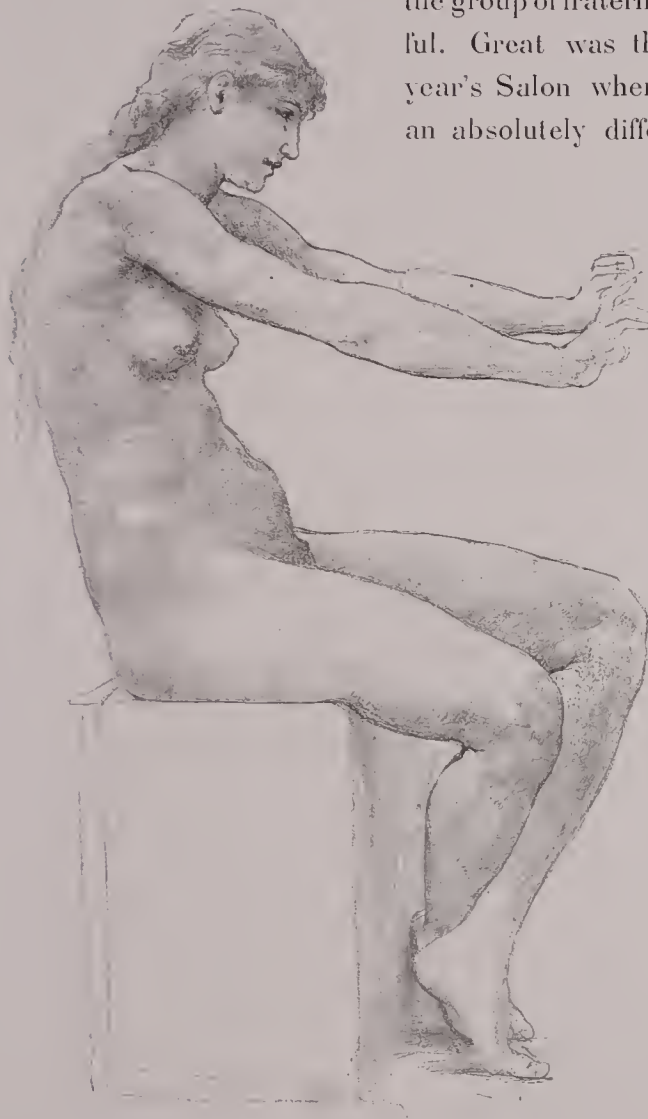
*Les Beaux-Arts en Europe* : "One thinks of André del Sarto before the Amour fraternel of M. Bouguereau, and that is no slight eulogy. A beautiful young woman that one supposes to be the Holy Virgin or Charity leans maternally over two children that are embracing like the little saint John and the child Christ in Holy Family pictures. Nothing could be purer, more agreeable and more charming than this group : the profile of the woman has a chaste grace that recalls, without imitating, that of the old Italian masters; the babies are little wingless angels that all the mothers would like to kiss and cover with caresses : a



vague color, delicate as that of a fresco, surrounds this adorable group." The artist's debut had been brilliant and presaged well for his future. Human sentiments had been strongly expressed in his Saint Cecilia, and

the group of fraternal love was charmingly graceful. Great was the astonishment at the next year's Salon when there appeared a work of an absolutely different character; the ceiling

of the "Hours of the day", and the decorative panels, representing "Friendship", "Fortune" and "Love", were a great success and revealed a decorator of great talent, and at the same time a painter thoroughly instructed in all that concerned his art. It was effectively these pictures that definitely established the reputation of Bouguereau and placed him in the foremost ranks of his brother painters. About the same time, the artist exhibited "Le Jour des morts", a picture purely naturalistic in character, and which showed, beside the decorator and historical painter, an attentive observer of picturesque realities, we will



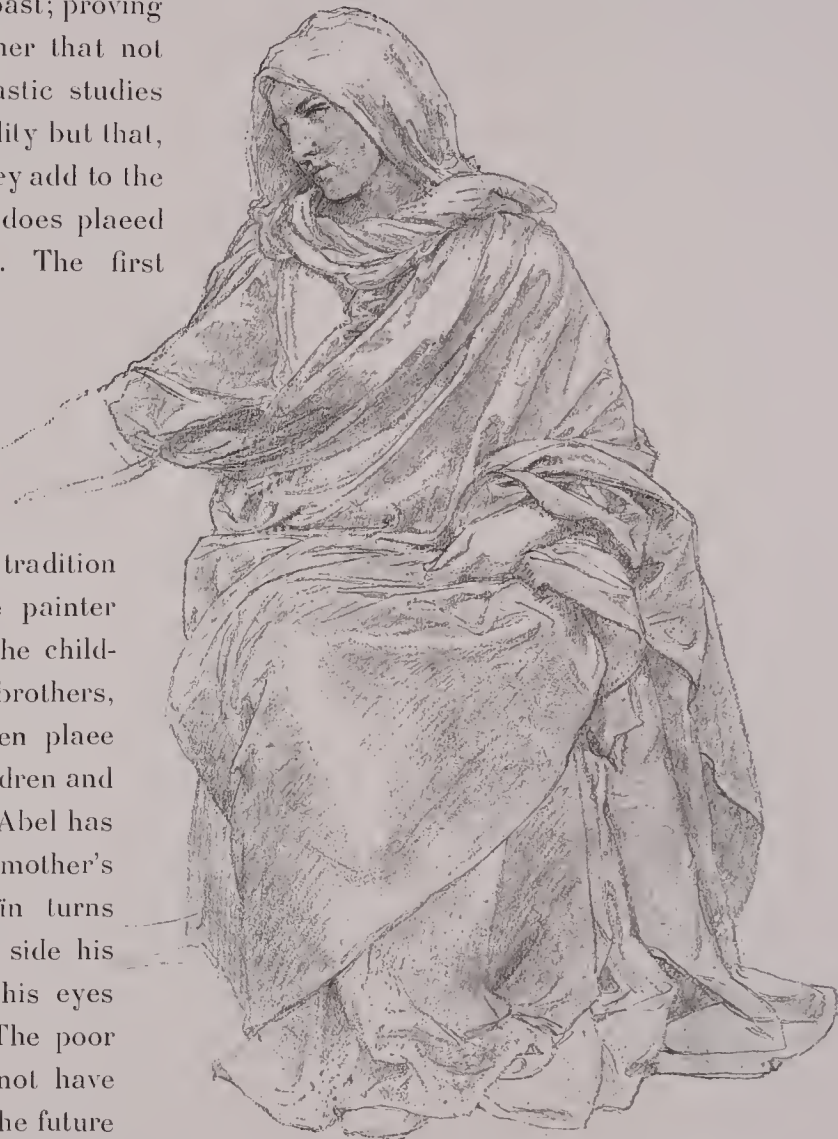
refer again to this last picture but it was important to show that from the debut the artist, who occupies our attention at present, manifested the three different forms in which his artistic temperament finds expression and which we will in turn study.

"La Première discorde" in the Salon of 1861 might possibly be ranked among biblical subjects although fancy has a much larger part in it



than history. This picture increased still more the artist's reputation, and showed especially a great originality. Here the painter's talent had arrived at its full maturity, henceforth sufficiently master of his process to shake off all rules and recollections and create works absolutely personal and unequalled in the past; proving in a striking manner that not only strong scholastic studies do not kill originality but that, to the contrary, they add to the value as a zero does placed after a numeral. The first discord is naturally that which arose between Cain and Abel, but instead of showing the bloody scene which tradition brings to us, the painter takes us back to the childhood of the two brothers, a dispute has taken place between these children and the little weeping Abel has taken refuge in his mother's bosom, whilst Cain turns away to the other side his rancorous head, his eyes rolling in anger. The poor mother who could not have presentiments of the future but who is greatly troubled, by the ferocious instincts of her son lets fall a big tear whilst vainly endeavoring to draw him to her : This picture is a very fine work, ingeniously conceived and executed in a perfectly masterly manner.

Bouguereau has rarely, strictly speaking, taken his subjects from history



but he has often treated religious and mythological subjects. There is always a double danger in religious painting if the artist remains true to the tradition, he necessarily recalls analogous subjects that have been already treated by masters whose names have become consecrated and then it is said his conceptions lack originality. If instead he turns aside from tradition then he is accused of being common-place and wanting in religious sentiment. For many people,

religious sentiment in art only exists in the works of the Middle-ages or of the Renaissance and the nineteenth century is incapable of innovating anything in their order of ideas. I think this is an error. If the christian legend represents a period in history the sentiments that it awakes in us belongs to all periods, and putting aside the question of belief nothing can

prevent the recital of the Passion being the most moving and dramatic thing that has ever been written. It is probable that in spite of the difficulties of the subject there will yet be many artists desirous of translating by their brush these subjects, and those who have a personality will know how to renew an old subject by the manner in which they present it.

It is the same for the Holy Families. A young mother smiling on her babe will always be a marvellous subject for a painter, and if to the charm of



tender sentiment he adds style and purity of lines the idea of the madonna will naturally occur to his mind.

It is certain however, at the present time, that religious subjects are not the order of the day and Bouguereau is one of the few artists that still seeks his ideal in this direction, all the more out of fashion at present as they are outside the boundary of governmental orders. He brings naturally his temperament which inclines to reverie, more than to the representation of simple reality. Thus in "la Pieta", he shows the mother of grief supporting the body of her divine son but he brings the angels down from heaven to associate the visionary with the realism of this earthly scene.

The same tone of feeling is to be found in all his Madonnas and this artist has painted several: that which we reproduce belongs to Madame Boucicault and is one of Bouguereau's principal works. The Virgin is accompanied by the child Jesus and little saint John, the manner in which they are presented and in the attitudes of the personages, the artist has conformed rigorously to the models furnished by tradition. He has found the means to revivify in some way this exquisite type that the italian painters have so often reproduced. Without positively resembling any of these Bouguereau's brings them to mind by its charm and grace, and his Madonna will one day take its place by right amongst those that are admired in our public collections.



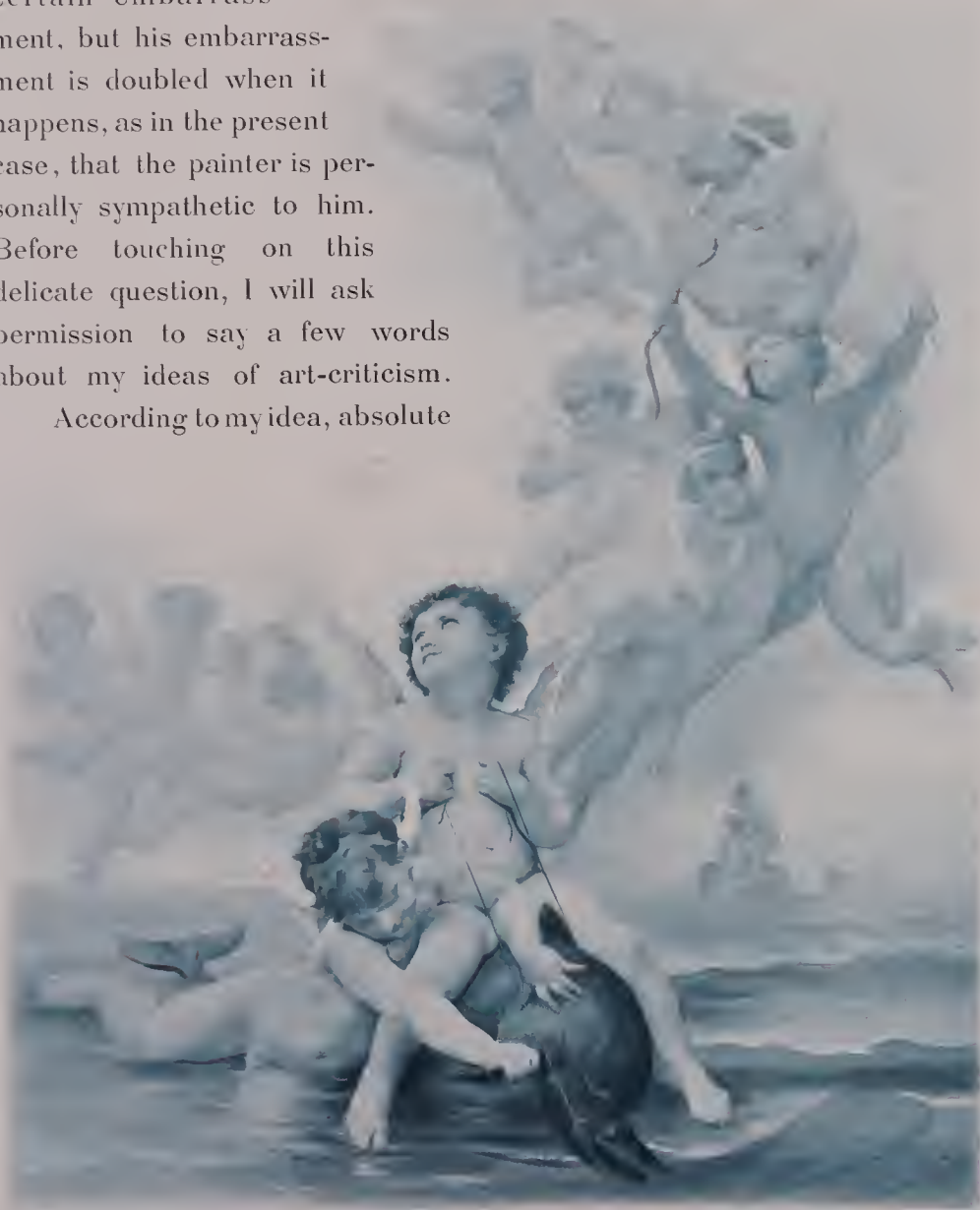
The artist has not stopped here, for this idea of the Madonna smiled upon him and in his "Vierge consolatrice" at the Luxembourg gallery, he has expressed quite a different idea. In addressing himself especially to afflicted mothers and in making the dead child the point of his composition, Bouguereau has given of the grand consoler an entirely personal



idea of such modernity that one feels nearer the *Méditations* of Lamartine than to the Renaissance Holy-Families.

In spite of the irresistible seduction that this picture and others of the same kind has exercised upon the mass of the public I cannot dissimulate that the artist has incurred reproaches without seeming to be incomplete. A writer who desires to examine a painter's work as a critic and does not content himself with simply writing a panegyric, always experiences a certain embarrassment, but his embarrassment is doubled when it happens, as in the present case, that the painter is personally sympathetic to him. Before touching on this delicate question, I will ask permission to say a few words about my ideas of art-criticism.

According to my idea, absolute







beauty only belongs to God, and in a work of art only a relative perfection can be obtained. But as unity is the first law of art, that which we call a flaw, in a work that otherwise provokes our admiration, is often but the reverse side of the quality that we admire, and we cannot suppress this defect without at the same time suppressing the quality which pleases us. To regret for example that Lesueur has not given to his coloring all the brilliancy of Rubens is to commit a misinterpretation, for if he had that brilliancy he would lose poetie and dreamy character, absolutely as Rembrandt would no longer be the magician of clair-obs-cure if he should mark his contours with a florentine precision. An italian critic, a great admirer of the Carrache and partisans of eclectic doctrines was distressed one day to find that in the works of the greatest masters he found something to be criticised, and asked himself naively what would be the perfect picture. The perfect picture according to his ideal would represent Adam and Eve: Adam should be drawn by Michael Angelo and be painted by Titians whilst Eve should be drawn by Raphael and painted by Corregio. This ingenious critic has forgotten to tell us what artist was to be charged with painting the landscape. Well, I think if such a picture could have been executed, it would only have been a hybrid work, without unity, and greatly inferior to a work conceived, drawn and painted by either one of the co-workers that he has chosen for an imaginary picture.





Applying these same ideas to the painter of whom we are now writing,



I would say that the faults that the critics sometimes reproach Bouguereau with seem to me to be a part of the same qualities that they appreciate in this artist. The reproach that I have oftenest heard expressed is a certain monotony in facture : they say that Bouguereau does not understand the art of sacrificing, and that by finishing equally all parts of his picture, by modelling in all parts his flesh until he gives it the polish of ivory he ends by giving to the whole an impression of coldness.

The intentional absence of everything in the touch that might resemble an accent, is, with this artist, the result of an absolute conviction to whose service he gives a knowledge that excludes all hesitation. He has an invincible repugnance against representing by artificial means the frequent deformities and those thousand little inequalities of the skin that according to some add to the life, but to his eyes, especially in religious subjects, are only useless, ugly deformities.

In acting thus Bouguereau leans towards the examples of the florentine and roman schools who were able to express life by strength of drawing and modelling without having recourse to any subterfuge. The same may be said of the primitive masters of the flemish and dutch schools, for it was only in the seventeenth century that the touch was recognised as a means of expression. Then first was seen





paintings with rough surfaces, and glassy paintings, paintings with the color laid on thickly and others rubbed in transparently, and a host of different ways of working that each one applied according to his own idea. The preceding epoch in art was ignorant of all these clevernesses, when the masters of the fifteenth century are studied, the simplicity of their methods strikes one, and yet the pictures of that time are often so well preserved that they seem as if but lately painted.

I admit that the question of methods of execution does not seem to me to be in itself a matter of serious importance. The essential is to know if the method of execution adopted by the artist is in harmony with the inspiration that has influenced him in his art work. For example it is impossible for me to find a work like "La Vierge consolatrice" in the Luxembourg cold, because the scene moves me profoundly, and if the facture had been uneven instead of being smooth; if the artist had accentuated the touch instead of dissembling it I am by no means certain that it would have impressed me as vividly.



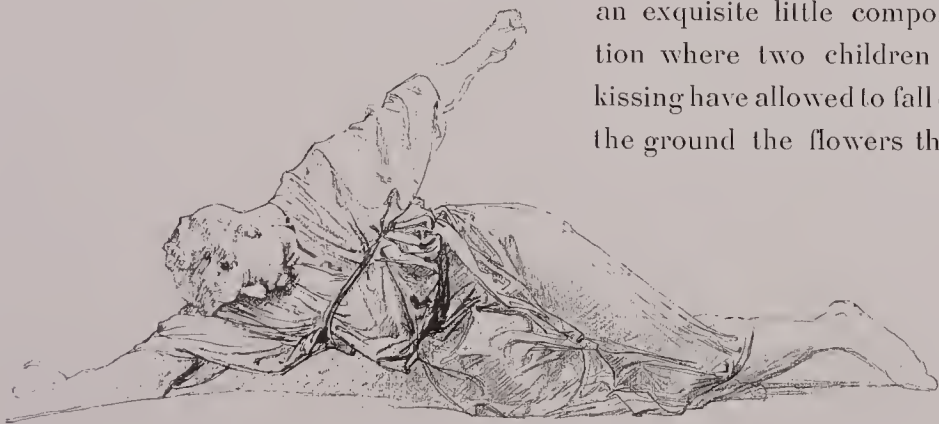
Bouguereau has a talent eminently distinguished, and he often finds notes of infinite tenderness. But when he desires to translate low vile sentiments, as he only knows them by hear-say, he is much less personal and becomes consequently rather cold. I remember the impression at the Salon of 1880 the "Bourreaux flagellant le Christ" produced on me. They were superbly drawn and the attitude was appropriate to the subject, but in spite of the intentional ugliness of the faces, their swollen muscles and the whips in their hands they inspired but a mitigated horror. I could but think of the otherwise villainous executioners that Ribera has shown us martyring the saints, and it seemed to me that the spanish painter in painting these ferocious actions must have experienced a kind of voluptuousness that never was dreamt of by Bouguereau. Although Bouguereau

with his compassionate sentiments can not fail to be touched at the sight of misery, yet he is in no wise loth to reproduce the children of the lowest



class of the populace. But when he paints misery he finds means to render it interesting. He recognises neither the stench nor the vermin, and Murillo's filthy little beggars might call the well-washed figures that our painter clothes in too clean rags aristocrats. But if the artist has his sad days, he also knows the pleasant smiles of gladness and often eloquently interprets the sentiment of family joys, and the graceful subjects, to which the tender sentiment lend itself, are more familiar to the artist than melancholy scenes.

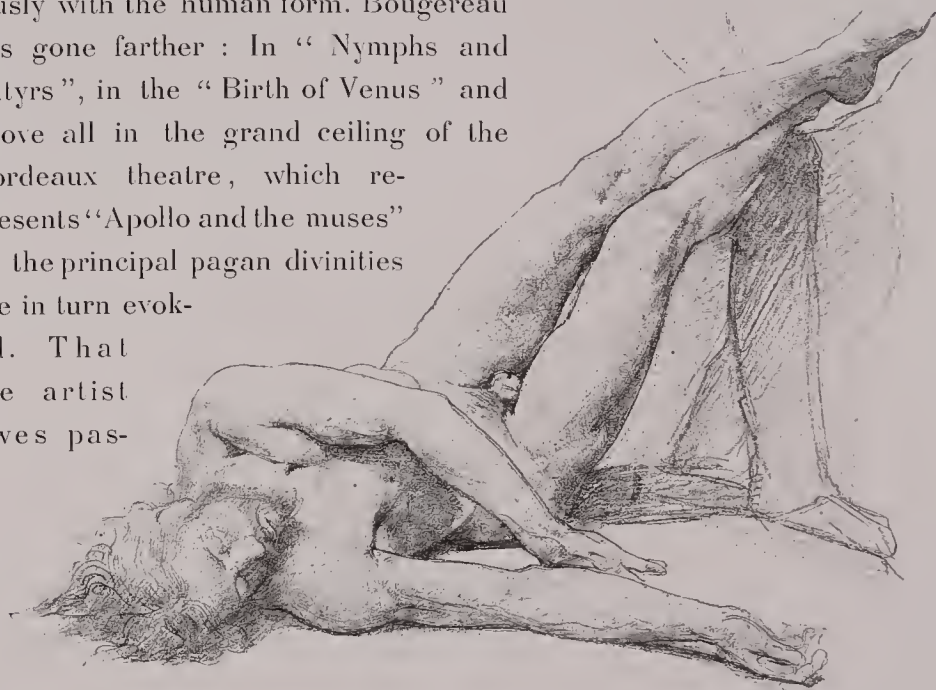
His pictures of this kind have sometimes the antique form that remind us of a poetical idyl. Such for instance is the "Return from the fields" where we see a young woman carrying on her shoulder a little child that the father looks at smilingly. "Peace" is



an exquisite little composition where two children in kissing have allowed to fall on the ground the flowers they

have just been picking. The "First Caress," "Fraternal Love," "The elder Sister," are pictures belonging to this same order of ideas. The "Indigent Family" is conceived in a sadder sentiment, but well expressed, whilst the "Little Marauders" is a form of pilfering too childish to be criminal.

We have seen Bouguereau as a painter of religious and familiar subjects, it now remains to examine his work as a décorator and interpreter of mythological scenes. Here the deep, meditative sentiments that we have signalized in his preceding works would be entirely out of place. Now the painter can give free vent to his admiration for the human form, he seems to have a decided predilection for the legend of Bacchus, graceful beautiful women pursuing satyrs in bacchanal revels will always be delicious motives for painters, as the landscape backgrounds combine so marvelously with the human form. Bouguereau has gone farther : In " Nymphs and Satyrs ", in the " Birth of Venus " and above all in the grand ceiling of the Bordeaux theatre, which represents " Apollo and the muses " all the principal pagan divinities are in turn evoked. That the artist loves pas-

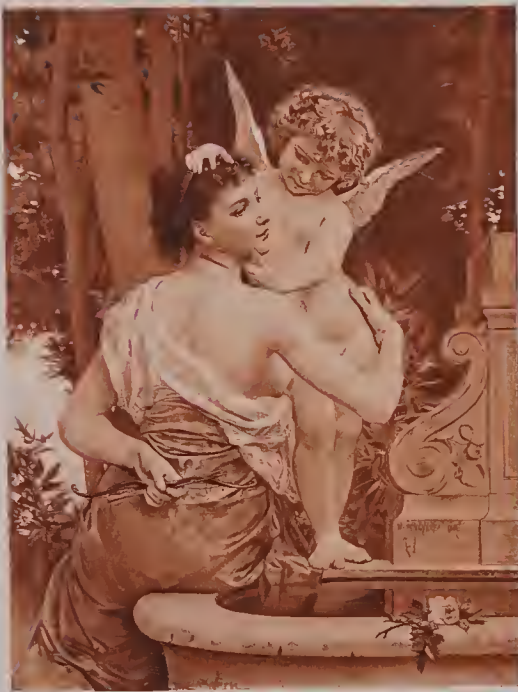


sionately, and has made a special study of the antique *bas-reliefs* is felt. That which is most striking in his pagan pictures is the rhythm and harmonious cadence in the lines.

To resume then our opinion of Bouguereau, we will add that under whatever aspect we examine his talent, as a man of sentiment or simply as a man of taste; his works always testify to an immense knowledge and an invincible faith in the principles, that he believes, he has found in tradition. It is to this that he owes the high place that he occupies in art. Bouguereau has been a member of the *Institut* since 1876, he was promoted to officer, in the *Légion d'honneur* in the same year. Besides these official titles and honors, the enormous number of votes that are given

him each time a jury is to be appointed affirms the high esteem in which his talent is held by his colleagues. Several times he has been elected president of the jury of painting, and has shown great firmness in upholding, against high official influence, the regulations that he would not permit to be transgressed. Finally a large number of young men have lately placed themselves under Bouguereau's direction. To the personal reputation that he has acquired by his works will soon be added that which always attaches itself to the master of a successful school.

RENÉ MÉNARD







## J. ISRAELS



Joseph Israëls, the painter of the humble and the poor, is as great a poet as painter. Absolutely original in a style which he had received from no one, unless it was from the great sixteenth century school, he has had the talent and strength to form himself as it were alone, at a time when he was surrounded by the worst examples. Like his chosen master Rembrandt he believed that all things were paintable. The miseries of life as well as its joys, and that the life of the populace, of the peasants and the fisherfolks was as interesting as that of some king or emperor whose death dates several centuries back. The woman who is nursing her young babe is she not a mother also; and when at a later period she weeps for her boy that has been swallowed up by the seas, will her grief be the less poignant because she is only a poor woman?

These great truths that are as immortal as art Israëls comprehended early. Whilst his contemporaries were such as the ultra-romantic Scheffer, or again under the title of historical painters, men of so little talent that their names have hardly reached us saving a few rare exceptions. Is he a naturalist? In spite of all that has been said : No! absolutely no. Because he paints a workman at his dinner surrounded by his family, or Jane's mother tossing pancakes for her daughter, should he be dubbed : realist. He, the

exquisite poet of color (he has written in his mother tongue poems as refined and distinguished as those of his palette)\*, this painter of refined and delicate sentiment who hears the bird singing in the wheatfields where the harvesters are working, or the cricket in the big chimney-corners of his peaceful interiors, cannot be called realist in the common acceptance of the word. His art, like Rembrandt's is entirely an interpretation. His painting gives the impression, the absolute aspect of reality, and yet how far away it is from nature! One must be a



great artist to be able to transform by art the poor fireside of a miserable fisher and create from it a poem. Israëls proves once more Bacon's grand saying : " Ars est homo advitus naturæ. "

In appearance Joseph Israëls is small, vivacious, with hair and beard

\* We give here a translation of some verses of the great painter; in the original they are exquisite and show the tendency of his ideas in poetry as well as in painting :

" In the dark suffocating hut of the fisherman, so cold that the wind rattles the unpainted partitions is there anything charming?

Yes! truly, near the smoking, soot covered chimney-corner, all ugly and old, a child in its chair, is playing. »

silvered, an intelligent and scrutinizing eye. Perfectly polite to visitors, he has the great charm of conversing fluently on all subjects. Beside painting and literature he adores music; Beethoven and all the classics have few more fervent auditors, his journey to Italy and his visits in Paris and London have given him an eclecticism rarely found among painters. A passionate admirer of the great masters of the different schools; he realized that greatness was to be found in simplicity as well as in sensational subjects, all his



work is there as proof of this. Excepting Millet he is the only modern painter who has expressed in an equal degree the intimate and moving sentiments that ex-hale from the life of the poor.

His numerous sojourns in our fishing villages that are scattered along the melancholy coast of the North sea, and on the endless heath covered meadows in the interior of the country have deve-

loped in him this form of studies; for in his early work neither from his professors nor his first pictures could have been foretold to what style he would finally devote himself.

Born in 1824 at Groningen, his parents who were Israelites reared him piously in the principles of their religion. Whilst studying Hebrew he drew a good deal under the direction of mediocre professors and even commenced painting with a certain painter Buys so that before he quitted his native town he had exhibited a life size study of a Jewish peddler who was a type in



the small town. This picture was so badly hung that it was almost impossible to see it. After this unfortunate debut he quitted Groningen and went to Amsterdam that he might work at the school of Fine-Arts. Here he settled



himself in the midst of the jewish quarter. This jewry has remained exactly as it was in the sixteenth century swarming with brightly colored oriental life that contrasts strangely with the extreme gravity that characterises the dutch capital.

At this epoch in Holland painting had fallen very low, a natural reaction after a glorious apogee. There was a school of portraitists and of historical genre painting that were commonplace and hollow beyond all expression, and landscapists, who carefully worked out details in a false and cold manner and believed they were inspired by Ruysdael. That was about all. Israëls worked at the Academy of painting, and especially in the atelier of Jan Kruseman. He did not yet fully appreciate the old

masters and like the greater portion of students tried to copy his professor. But his professor, with good taste advised him to always work from nature and assured him by so doing he would soon find the old masters worthy of all admiration, while he would be more dissatisfied with his own work. This continued until 1845. He lived partially on the proceeds of the pictures, which he painted to obtain money; small canvases in the romantic



tone of the epoch: ladies in white satin and cavaliers playing the lute by moonlight. Having gone to Dusseldorf he saw a canvas by Knaus (the players) that was to him a revelation. The simplicity of this natural and truthful painting showed him that there was something more than the romantic style, that there existed other methods by which the sentiment



called forth by the subject might be rendered by means of color and composition.

From this time he had found his way and desiring to learn more than he could at Amsterdam he went to Paris and studied in the atelier of Picot. Being asked one day what was his impression of Paris when he found himself

there, without acquaintances, at the end of his resources, and without money, he answered us that he was astonished that that was the city where so many came yearly to amuse themselves, for he had found it a pandemonium where great men walked over the poor untalented ones, amongst whom he believed himself to belong.

For a year and a half he worked assiduously from the model, learning as much from his numerous companions as from the master's criticisms.

For his amusement, he made copies of Velasquez and Rembrandt at the Louvre. Not servile, hard, copied copies, but studies from these painters conceived in an absolutely personal manner, he remained here until 1848 and then returned to Amsterdam where he exhibited the portrait of an actress and a large picture taken from Jewish history : " Aaron finds in the tabernacle the corpses of his two sons ". At this time, he painted historical pictures that already essentially differed from the work of the epoch by a research of color and tone unknown amongst his contemporaries.

About 1856, his personality commenced to show itself, one day discontented with his attempts in historical painting which did not satisfy him, he went to Sandvort to rest and make some studies in another style.

This little village scattered over the dunes that border the coast of the North sea is principally inhabited by poor fishermen. Instead of



spending a few days he remained two entire months, working steadily living in the midst of the people and sharing their life. The simplicity of their manners, the harmonious coloring of their picturesque interiors all proved to him what simple and natural elements there are in the lives of all men. It was at this time that he commenced to paint absolutely original pictures not following any master.

One of the first of this period is his " First love ", a young girl talking with her lover, and then follows all the different episodes of a fisherman life : " A young girl knitting in the door way ", " The father taking his children to their mother's grave ", " The Cradle " : two children are washing a willow-basket cradle on the edge of the shore, it is in a silvery





tone, luminous, bright and gay, which is as much his note as the sad, dark tones of his interiors. For Joseph Israëls has the great art of moving his public. His canvases so admirable in drawing, tone and color have a rare quality: they seize hold of the beholder by the profound sentiment that they call forth. For him a picture is not simply an elegant piece of painting, it is also a page from life.

His "Children of the sea" is full of childhood: blond and rosy playing in an opaline atmosphere. His "Domestic grief", a poor woman seated by a fireless fireside peeling potatoes is softly lighted, whilst in the background of the picture her husband is seen playing cards with some boon companions in a luminous penumbra, it is the grief of the forsaken wife, which is as immortal as the beaming joy of childhood.

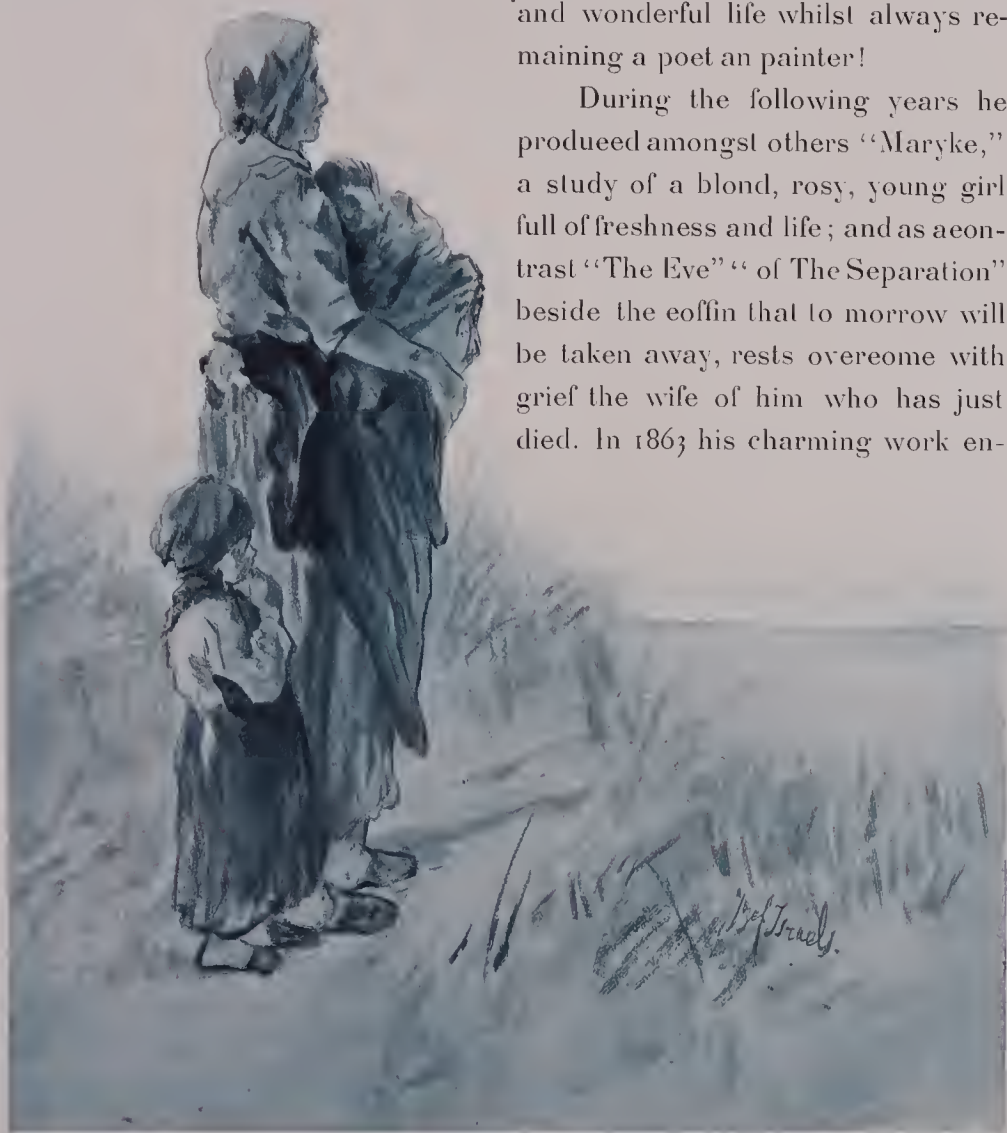


In 1861 he painted his "Shipwreck". This, one of his best pictures, was exhibited in London at the same time as "The Cradle". It represents the morning after the tempest, the landscape is sombre only lightened by a livid

break near the horizon the fishermen are carrying on their shoulders the corpse of their comrade, they follow the widow who leads by the hand her two children, slowly they ascend the downs, the figures are detached in value against the sea and sky, and everything in this picture, as in all his pictures, is more than the tangible reality of the subject it is the truth that exhales from the scene which he paints. This however does not prevent his being often styled realist, he who is so, in such a slight degree, because instead of brilliant stuffs he takes his models from all points. But what grandeur he is able to impart to the simplest subject that he paints! What penetrating sentiment

and wonderful life whilst always remaining a poet and painter!

During the following years he produced amongst others "Maryke," a study of a blond, rosy, young girl full of freshness and life; and as a contrast "The Eve" "of The Separation" beside the coffin that to-morrow will be taken away, rests overcome with grief the wife of him who has just died. In 1863 his charming work en-



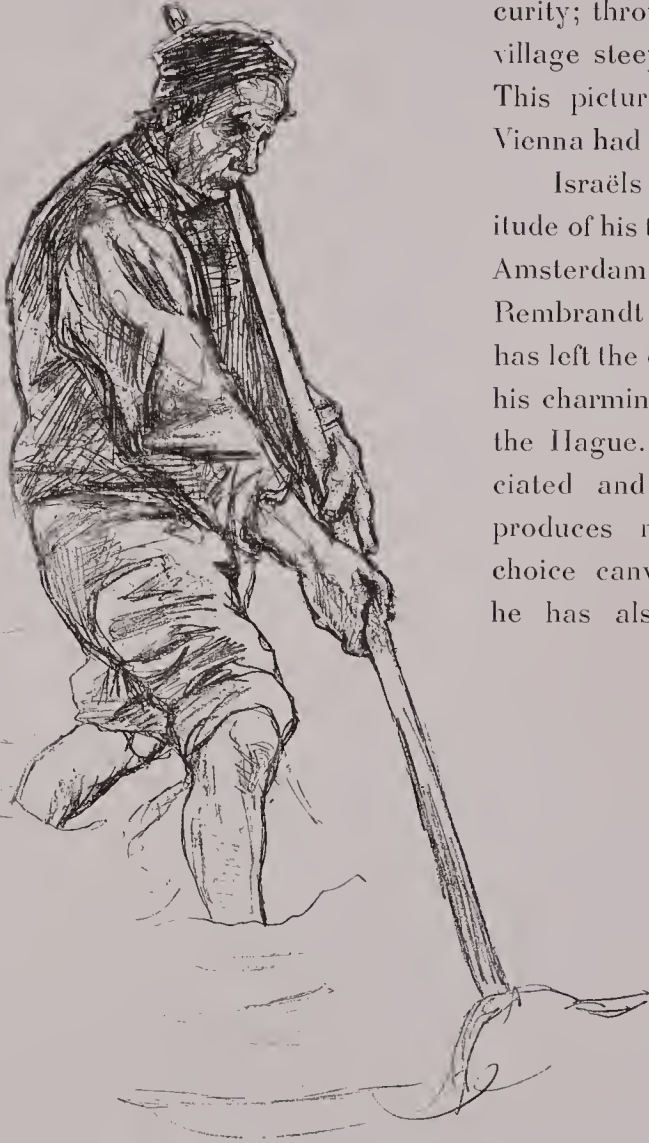
titled "The Future". A young matron is preparing a cradle intended for her first born; a little later a celebrated canvas "From darkness into light" they are bearing away the coffin while the widow and children weep in a

chamber plunged in transparent obscurity; through the half-opened door a village steeple is seen in the distance. This picture that was exhibited in Vienna had a resounding success.

Israëls is at this time in the plenitude of his talent; until 1870 he lived at Amsterdam in the same street in which Rembrandt had lived, but since then he has left the capital to come and inhabit his charming and hospitable house at the Hague. He is well known, appreciated and everywhere admired, he produces numerous excellent, and choice canvases. During these years he has also painted portraits. We

remember to have seen one of professor Goudsmit, professor of the University of Leyden, a marvel of color and life, and another of a young lady whose rose and grey tones reminded us of Velasquez. And always in this way: from good to better, his genre pictures delicate, fine and well con-

ceived. One of these was much remarked at Paris, where it was known as "La Fête de Jeanne," a fisherman's wife is making pancakes for her little daughter. "The village poor", shows a rare intensity, fine color and life, they are grouped together around a boat, just returned from the herring fishing, awaiting the portions of fish that are to be distributed to them,





without refering to the luminous color and the atmosphere which bathes the scene; there are in this picture admirably chosen and grandly characteristic types of the Scheveningen fishing population. "The Cobbler" who is sitting with his family at table with a dish of steaming potatoes before them; and "Alone in the world," this work, painted in shadow and grief as Duranty says, is filled with a profound melancholy and also attracted considerable attention at Paris, where it was exhibited in the Exposition



Universelle of 1878: like that of the "Silent dialogue" of 1882: in which an old man in a sitting posture regards his only companion, his dog, while filling his pipe. At the recent exhibition at Amsterdam were to be seen and admired a superb "Shrimp fisher" that testified to the vigor of this inexhaustible talent, that, far from remaining stationary, continually increases.

We have especially noticed some of these canvases, gay or sad, but always wonderfully distinguished in tone, and exquisite in harmonious color. Often the same note is repeated, but always so perfectly that it leaves nothing to be desired.

In Holland more than elsewhere every oil painter is also a watercolorist. Not watercolorists in the sense generally understood in France, where they dash upon paper impressions often superficial, but always adorable, but in a style quite apart. Their water-colors are carefully worked out, pushed to the extreme of finish, not only they do not fear to worry the paper by continuous working over if so the picture becomes more powerful, but the dutch water-colorists mingle with their colors a little gouache and thus obtain remarkable effects. Israels like his compatriots paints equally well in oil or water, and he has succeeded in making real pictures in water-colors.

We have seen in these later years among others a life size fisherman's head intense in life and color, and the portrait of his intimate friend, the painter van Witsen. Also a young mother nursing her babe, not to be forgotten in its charming refinement, a little chef-d'œuvre.

And not only has he made quantities of water-colors but, as an ardent admirer of Rembrandt and Teniers etchings, he has also tried his hand in that method and perfectly succeeded. Having commenced in 1874 by twenty small sketches from his pictures of children, the dunes and mysterious interiors; now he attacks larger plates. At the Amsterdam exhibition were to be seen: "A man lighting his pipe" and in his studio we saw a large "study of



an old woman"; these etchings are essentially artistic: sometimes a few lines fine as the meshes of a cobweb suffice to express the soft contours of a child's head; again the plate is covered with scratches in every direction that admirably renders the tone of decrepit walls bathed in shadow as in some of his interior scenes. Artist and poet to his finger tips everything that

he touches with his brush or graver become a true and lifelike work of art. In creating in Holland the new style painting of the period, he has had the fate of all inventors, that is, he has formed a school and the followers in his traces are numerous. During the last twenty years, the dutch school has been transformed. Mauve, Les Maris, Mesdag have accomplished in their different styles what Israels has done for the figure, and among those who paint the same subjects as he, Ark, Blommers and Newkuys have equalled him in many ways. But the gem that Israels will always preserve for his crown is the exquisite poetry that exhales from his work, the delicacy of sentiment that characterises his slightest sketch as well as his most complete pictures renders him unique, inimitable. Some masters cannot be copied,



that he belongs to this class his son Isaac quickly discovered for, already a painter of talent, far from imitating his father he seeks his way in a style and manner absolutely personal.

The "young Israëls" as he is called seems to

prefer military subjects, he first studied with his father and afterwards at Paris when he has exhibited and been awarded a *mention honorable*. His latest important works are "The Funeral of a soldier" and "Departure of dutch troops for the Indies."

Israël's house in the Koninggracht faces one of the numerous canals that runs through the town and opposite the Zoological garden and is easily designated, from its neighbors by the door plate that reads simply *Israëls*. The entrance hall is hung with engravings and etchings from pictures of the french painter Millet. On the salon walls we find many paintings that have been collected by the owner or received by him in exchange from brother artists also many studies by him; notes of effects and studies of excursions along the Holland shore. His studio is a large room furnished with great



simplicity. Several easels, a round table with shelves for brushes and materials, comfortable arm-chairs, a brown-toned carpet make up the studio furniture.

But in this studio the painter arranges real dutch interiors with the furniture he has collected in the peasant's houses, and if we should visit him, while he is at work upon one of that class of paintings, we would find in one corner of the studio the window with small panes of glass set in lead shaded with a white muslin curtain drawn on a rod, over which green curtains are hung, the peasant's table, chairs, pots, pans and old delft jars and the many dishes we have so often seen in the backgrounds of his interiors. But Israëls pictures are not all interiors, they often represent out-door life



and for these paintings he has built a glass studio where he can have the defined light upon the model as fully as if he were painting upon the busy sea shore. This studio is only separated from the former by a curtain and by drawing this aside the two may be connected.

The struggle was long before Israëls became some one in his own country. The public, stagnated in its pseudo-classic traditions, commence to admire him without yet seeming to be fully convinced of his worth.

The honor of having first appreciated him belongs to England. There is in that country, where his works are eagerly sought for, amateurs, like Mr Forbes of London, who have gathered together complete galleries of his pictures and water-colors. And not only England, but France and

Belgium know and appreciate him infinitely better than the larger portion of his compatriots. So true is it that a prophet is without honor in his own country. Thus it is fortunate for him that for artists limits of country do not exist, any more than for the rain-drops that form and fall refreshing and fruitful alike everywhere.

As a painter he is exclusively dutch; painting in the healthy traditions of the sixteenth century, poet of the humbler folks, a Burns in painting like Millet, but less severe and more intimate than he was. Israels will remain one of the grand glories of his country whose name, now, is only heard through her immortal painters.

ZILCKEN.





## JULES BRETON



M. Jules Breton attracts and fascinates me. I love the man profoundly for I know him well, and I admire the painter having followed his triumphal march from canvas to canvas during twenty years. Jules Breton is a complex being. Poesy has endowed him with two strings to his bow: he describes as a thinker and artist and paints like a poet. From his earliest infancy he has been conscious of this gradual developement in face of nature's marvels. Thus, little by little, this initiation became a creed; so that the mysteries and wonders of the Earth have not had so eloquent an interpreter, since the time of Jean-François Millet.

Before studying more thoroughly the master's qualities, we must however retrace back to fifty years ago, and show the place then occupied

by the style of painting that Rousseau, Dupré, Troyon and Diaz were to render illustrious.

Landscape then experienced a striking revival. To the conventional canvases where the sacred and fanciful were mingled, making ancient heroes move in a setting that Poussin might have filled, succeeded wonderful discoveries in the field of truth. Apple-trees were apple-trees, a brook



spotted with ducks was unmistakably a brook, a cottage was a real cottage without bombast and solemn pomp being allowed to alter the real interest. Amongst these revolutionists who have destroyed conventionalism, — A Bastille often overthrown and always rebuilt, — some placed cows and sheep in fields more like nature than those were in which Paul Potter and Cuyp had scattered their flocks, other planted a lifelike rustic in the midst of a winding path; and the “Soldat laboureur” and “Cincinnatus,” heirlooms of the first Empire, were forgotten. Amongst the first and almost at the same

time as J.-F. Millet, Jules Breton decorated his landscapes with suitable figures to heighten the effect, as much by the arrangement of their positions and the sincerity of their attitudes as by the native nobleness of their movements. This is interesting to note, particularly as the artist rather hesitated at his debut. Drolling, whose atelier he had frequented, did not approve of innovations. He respected the past and had a vague fear of the future. His lessons often dwelt on the double theme : what yesterday has given, what to-morrow is preparing. It was by coming unconsciously in contact with things seen and heard that Jules Breton made his essays, where philosophy amalgamated with the socialistic ideas of the times.



Here I will pause, as I wish, before continuing my study, to cite some fragments from my hero's "Souvenirs d'enfance," unpublished notes, confidences of penetrating zest that show the unfolding of a mind, the birth of a genius. I quote these pages as they are written :

" One of the parts of the house that I was most fond of was a large garret, filled with a confused mass of bizarre objects where I was continually making discoveries every day.

" I spent long hours searching in dusty corners, turning over heaps of rusty iron, worm-eaten woodwork, rags and old papers. All these exhaled a peculiar odor.

" This place seemed venerable to me because it contained so many old useless things that to me seemed to be dead.

" I was fond of the bareness of the long low walls leaning against the heavy framework where the big beams crossed each other all draped with cobwebs.

" And then, through the little dormer-windows how austere and solemn the light fell! The air blew in blue and visible, like dust from heaven that had come to join itself to all this earthly dust.

" At times, when I was there alone, I was overcome by a delicious fear and could hear my heart beat like a hammer.

" In the furthest part of this garret there were two big worm-eaten chests, one full of pieces of paper that my father used as gun-wadding and that I have since learned were assignats that had represented a small fortune; the other contained very interesting books. Whilst outside, the pigeons, in their ordinary sports scratched with their claws on the tile covered roof, how many times have I forgotten myself turning over the



big yellow toned old volumes whose red edges, thick binding with copper covered corners inspired me with veneration!

“What marvellous cuts these old books contained! one found lambs, eagles, beautiful climbing flowers and all the life of Jesus-Christ represented by crowds of figures full of movement. There were abominable platoons of jews bristling with lances with Jesus in their midst, with his head sadly bowed, the poor long-haired victim! old men with big turbans and large beards, women holding children trembling with fear, towns with massive towers and thick walls, ragged beggars that filled one with horror; all this swarming on every page, advancing, retreating, getting lost to reappear again in other situations. What master conceived these vast compositions of little personages? I do not know.



“These books, mislaid, perhaps destroyed, I have not seen since, that I shall never see them again, I regret extremely. When I try to recall the engravings, they seem to me to realize, without the shamelessness of style, the diffusiveness of

Callot. They were for me the first manifestation of an art that was to be the passion of my life, the most charming, the purest, the most troubling. Who knows but that they decided my vocation!

“However by their very intricacy they could not afford any direct instruction.

“ My first master was an unknown personage who had drawn with chalk on a barn doorway, a profile, holding a pipe in its mouth, the bowl turned upside down sent its cork-screw wreaths of smoke towards the ground.

“ I imitated it and for the first time gave proof of originality by correcting the false position of the pipe. Beside the marvellous engravings of the garret I had seen, in the way of works of art, pictures and statues in the parish church, at the high altar a Resurrection that I afterwards recognised as an informal copy of Rubens; over the altar to the left, an Assumption that was remarkable on account of an angel's head that resembled one of my little comrades, finally over the altar to the right, a Saint Piat on a chocolate background that was most appetising. As to the statues they realized the most grotesque conceptions of barbarous chisels. There was above all a hideous Saint



Sebastien two feet in height pierced with real arrows and the body covered with drops of blood. I regarded with a vague terror all these caricatures with badly formed members, with ugly and stupid faces, they did not make me laugh, even when in the processions they rocked upon the plank of their handbarrow, among the roses and peonies in the midst of which the naive bearers regularly placed their caps. But sometimes



they seemed transfigured by the clouds of incense and the undulating tremor of the candles. They seemed to be living a strange life and to mingle their mysterious voices to the bellowing chanters and the feeble wails of the ophicleide. However, I preferred the rows of statuettes that stood out horizontally from the cornice of the church, these were mostly beheaded at the time of the revolution. How I loved, above the high altar framed in its crown of wood work, an old picture hardly to be distinguished, a "Pieta"! How often it sent me dreaming! How one imagines the woeful thinness of Christ, his bluish lips and the distressed eyes of his mother! It has since been taken down and I

thought  
I recognised,  
in this

panel, an old copy of Quintin-Metzys."

At the Salon of 1849, M. Jules Breton exhibited "Misery and Despair", and at that of 1850, "Hunger". Then he checked himself on the declivity that might allure him, meditated during three years and did not reappear in public until 1853, the year of his debut in rural painting. He then exhibited the "Return of the Harvesters" which gave promise of a sincere painter, a faithful observer, a courageous interpreter of man in the fields.

Surely, the enterprise appeared rash, knowing what a want of success attended

each work of J.-F. Millet, the admirable historian of field labor.

I have, in another place, judged these two men: between Millet and





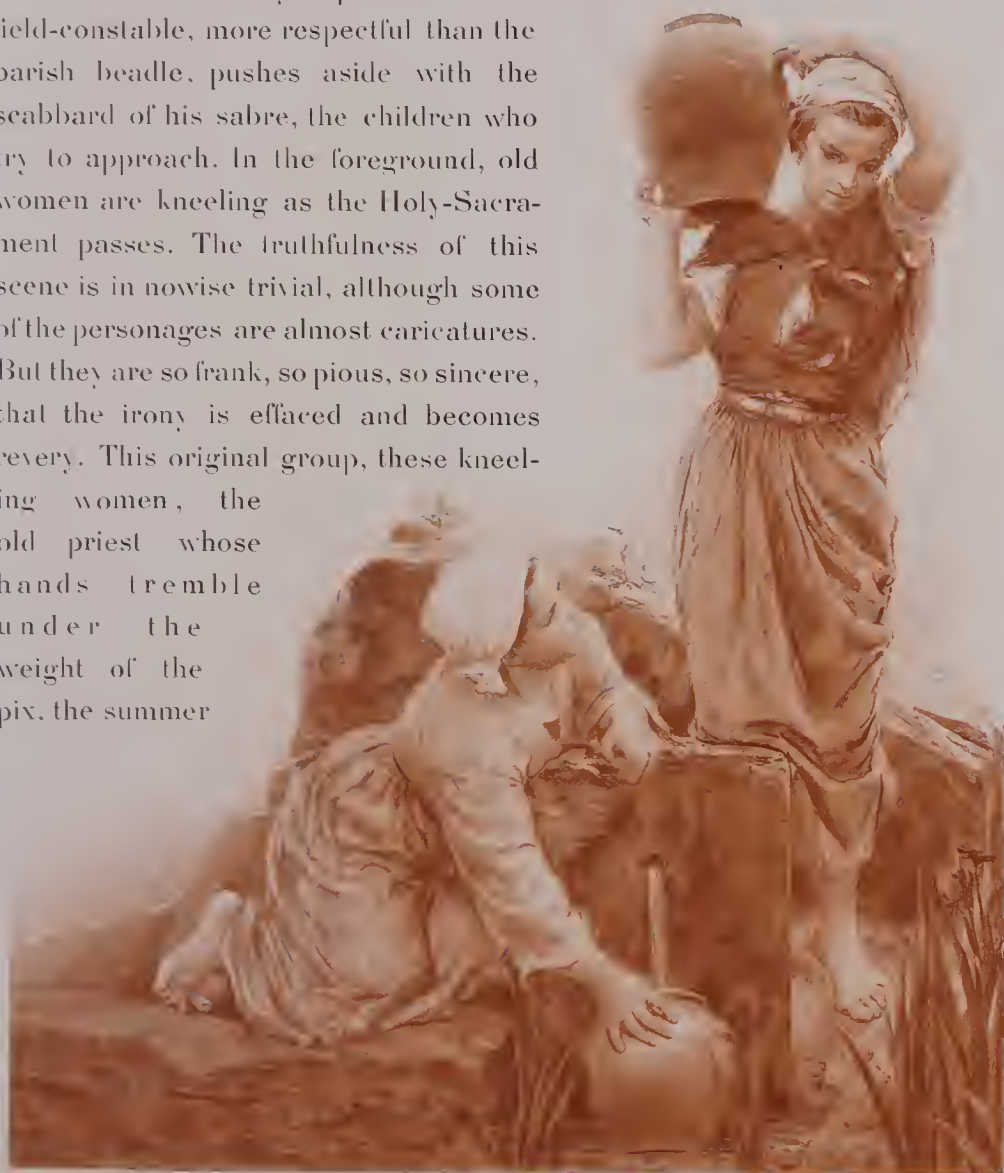
Jules Breton, no comparison can be established. Both were thinkers with the souls of poets. Only, with Millet the thinker was austere, the poet grievously bound. The breath of La Bruyère is felt in his pictures. He sees the peasant as a sort of naïve brute, sanguine and believing, always bowed over the furrow that he moisten with the sweat of his brow. He follows him step by step, takes part in his labor, penetrates the misery haunted interiors with him; follows him to the cattle shed and whilst he pushes the plough, digs potatoes, trims the hedges, grafts trees and prunes the vines. He thus obtains greatness through humility.

Jules Breton, on the contrary, emancipates from the glebe yoke the peasant, he represents him as free by his work, he raises and ennoble him. The beings with which he furnishes his canvases are men breathing freely, joyous, unsubdued, accomplishing their tasks as if they where priests of some pagan rites. Idyllic figures detached from some of Virgil's pages and as true as the types produced by Millet.

Paul de Saint-Victor says the same when he writes in his work on the Muséum of the Luxembourg, published in the *Paris-Guide*: «The place that Leopold Robert used to hold at the Luxembourg, is today filled in a superior manner by M. Jules Breton. It is impossible to too highly praise this sober and sincere talent, rustic without ugliness, popular without being trivial, that seeks to raise by his



art, men and field labor. "La Bénédiction des blés en Artois" was I believe the debut of Jules Breton. It is a country procession that is passing a pathway bordered by hedges, four young girls dressed in white, carry the statue of the Virgin; the old curé, walking under a canopy, raises the host, the God hidden in the blest bread seems to bless the fields where grew the consecrated wafer that now envelopes it. Behind walk the village notables looking awkward in their sunday clothes, their faces even seeming to have their sunday expression. The field-constable, more respectful than the parish beadle, pushes aside with the scabbard of his sabre, the children who try to approach. In the foreground, old women are kneeling as the Holy-Sacrament passes. The truthfulness of this scene is in nowise trivial, although some of the personages are almost caricatures. But they are so frank, so pious, so sincere, that the irony is effaced and becomes revery. This original group, these kneeling women, the old priest whose hands tremble under the weight of the pix, the summer





Juan B. Bohn 1898





sky that covers with its light the village pomp, all this penetrates, moves and affects us bringing to mind the clear and pure aurora of childish souvenirs.

“The Recall of the Gleaners”, this writer also says, attains without effort the poesy of an eclogue : the “Evening” shows us a peasant girl, seated in a lonely place dreaming whilst a ring of her companions, turn vaguely in the distant plains. »

Here is the talent of M. Jules Breton analyzed in just measure : the path in which he has entered carefully defined, the circle in which he moves fully circumscribed. Alas ! death has paralysed the hand of him who knew so well what to write, the pen that has traced so many enchanting pages, so many never to be forgotten, chefs-d'œuvre ; if I attempt to follow him, it is at a distance with the admiration that is due to the powerful, and the respect that we owe our elders.

We have arrived at that epoch in the life of Jules Breton when glory had already commenced to shed an aureola around his head. He had at the same time the public and the critics for him : the most ardent and learned of the Salon critics of that time, W. Bürger, almost crushed Léopold Robert under the weight of the eulogies that he conferred upon his successor, he esteemed the latter, simpler and truer than Leopold Robert.

Truly, Jules Breton has become master in his style, and sure of pursuing, without any unpleasant adventure, the route in which he has entered and that now seems freed from all the difficulties that had so dismayed him. He has acquired all the gifts that constitute the true artist : elegance and purity in drawing, the composing of subjects,



ingenious arrangement of groups, the science of coloring, and that fine harmony that bathes the simplest scenes and gives them as it were a reflection of life, a human vibration. With large canvases or episodes symbolised by a single figure, he now went forward without hesitation enlarging his facture, raising his ideal in proportion as he approached nearer the fugitive: truth! He painted "the Consecration of the church of Oignies" and a "Haymaker, the Vintage at Château-Lagrange" and a "Keeper of turkeys", "the End of the day" and "the Reading".

In 1865, the "End of the day" and the "Reading" obtained an immense suc-



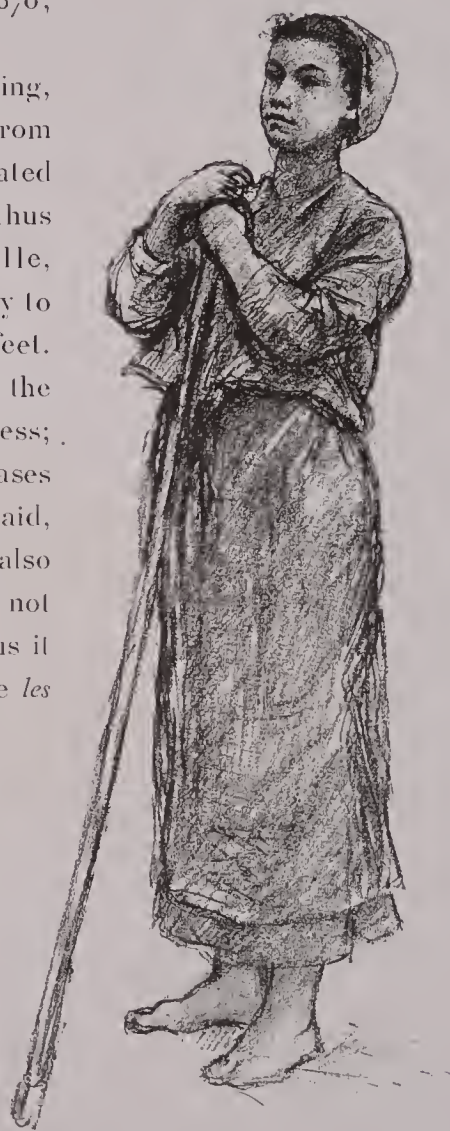
cess and Jules Breton was classed with Millet as a master of rustic painting. And let it be remarked that he triumphed with very simple and natural creations that for that reason were touching. The artist that has thus glorified the sublime labor of man in the fields, where are mingled and confounded, according to the season, ploughing, sowing, reaping, haymaking, vintage; embracing all that constitutes the generating and mysterious forces of the earth. He tells of the eternal recommencing of the years, as they turn in an infinite circle, and proves that arcadian landscapes only exist in children's story books, that in fact man must live by the sweat of his brow and children be born through pain.

In 1867 at the Universal Exhibition, W. Bürger writes "Millet and Breton seem to be the two artists who stand forth preeminently."

"Gathering potatoes" dates from 1868; a "Grand Pardon Breton" and the "Mauvaises Herbes" from 1869; the "Washerwoman" and the "Spinner", from 1870; "the Fountain", from 1872.

Here the painter changed his surrounding, and asked inspiration from other horizons. From the marshy plains of Artois he emigrated towards Brittany, drawing nearer the sea thus refreshing his talent by modifying his style. He, the poet, will now be able to lull his reverie to the sound of the waves that break at his feet. He can now try to wrestle from the ocean the secret of its wild beauties and tragic greatness; and what he could not confide to his canvases he has enclosed in strophes, for as I have said, Jules Breton is not only in soul a poet, but also in thought. That which the brush does not readily express he sings in his verses. Thus it is that he has given us first that fine volume *les Champs et la Mer*, and later *Jeanne*.

All literary men will remember the emotion caused by the appearance of the first verses by Jules Breton. He had warm sponsors and numerous admirers. And to Leconte de Lisle, José-Maria de Heredia, de Banville and Alphonse Daudet, who were already his friends were now joined a legion of enthusiasts of ingenious rhymes and personal flights. Parnassus counted one more defender, a defender who possessed, on account of this dualism, the image, the relief and intensity of things long brooded over, at the same time a very pure and highly colored form. Victor Hugo wrote to him in 1875 : "To be twice a poet; to be like Lamartine and also like Corot; to be by the strophe and by the palette : this is given to you, Monsieur. I thank you for





your charming book, and I send you double plaudits. " Five years later after *Jeanne*, Gambetta sent the following note to Jules Breton : Dear great master. — I have read your works, I have seen them, and I cannot tell even to you if it is the poet or the painter that has most deeply touched, affected, conquered and fascinated me. Fortunately you yourself no longer distinguish, as in the renowned century (the sixteenth, that of Master François) you appear as the singer and interpreter of the beautiful in all its forms in all aspects to the great joy of your admirers, of whom I am one. "



If I had not promised to keep the secret, I could have given you sympathetic readers, a real, and un hoped-for treat : the verses upon which Jules Breton's new Salon picture will be formed. They are entitled : the " First communicants " and are dedicated to that rare woman, the worthy companion of one of the first writers of the times, madame Alphonse Daudet. You will find them in the Salon catalogue of the Fine-Arts Exhibition of 1884.

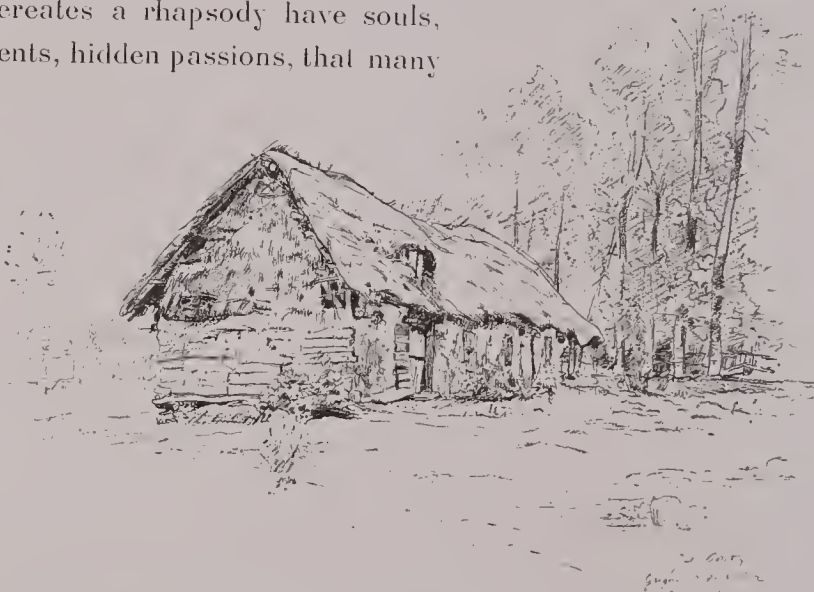
Do not seek the questionable honor of being but a vulgar photograph when looking upon nature, but seek to express the nature that appear to you rather than nature as it exists in reality, this is

what artists of temperament have always sought. Nature causes to every gifted brain irresistible impressions. Nature attracts, retains, hold captive, consoles like a loving and beloved woman ; she is presented under so many seductive aspects. She serves as a background to so many scenes longtime caressed ; she can be tender or gracious, disordered or wild. Delicate apparitions, fabulous figures, titanic profiles show themselves. The wind circulates with melodious sighs or runs riot with symphonious uproar. Corot, turn by turn called forth the dryads from their mythological rounds, made Shakesperian sorceresses exult whilst showing Macbeth's horoscope, or be crushed in the conflagration of the walls of Gomorrah. I take him



in three different aspects, all three shows us landscapes unknown to nature but that fascinated the artist, landscapes warm, animated, humanised if one might so express it by the genius that had invented or rather re-elified them after the creator.

Jules Breton looks at art in the same way. If it is a rural site, a rustic episode, a frail personage, he raises them to his own level, and endues them with his feeling. It is impossible to despise the heroes of his conceptions. He respects them, esteeming that however modest the attempt accomplished, the attempt should be taken note of. He also believes that these humble folks about whom he creates a rhapsody have souls, concealed sentiments, hidden passions, that many are good, so devoted as to sacrifice themselves, human to the point of sublimity. And he exalts them as others have celebrated the glories of Homer's warriors. Thus it is that he reaches greatness frequently with common place events, because he does not descend to his models, but instead raises them to the region where his spirit soars.



I shall be told that to understand such a practice one needs to be gifted; that a certain amount of intelligence is necessary. Assuredly. The same as to appreciate the beauties of an opera, the perfect finish of a book or the epic form of a brave action. So much the worse for the ignorant or the indifferent; for them the kingdom of the beautiful does not belong to this world.

To be moved before a work of art proves the force of that work; and only those who espouse their subjects can hope to vanquish the public's indifference, and penetrate, in spite of the most pronounced resistance, to the most profound intimacy of his entity. When the painter shows me the "Young girl keeping cows", or that "Brittany woman" following a pilgrimage with the

extatic eyes of a Sainte Theresa; or the "Cliffs" to which a fisher's wife is clinging, distractedly interrogating the howling ocean, I feel myself held, I see the incidents and I admire the superb thought of him who can make me feel thus, for I suffer and am moved. I know that I shall seem bizarre in thus unveiling my thought. What does it matter! I belong entirely to those who sacrifice themselves. I hate the skillfulness of hand that transforms the greater part of our painters into calligraphists. I only prize the ambition of conception, the human side of partly seen chimeras that are procured by intensity of emotions.

Thus each day his flight is higher, his talent enlarging takes more force. With the same sure and equal step he follows his route, his eye fixed on a luminous point, a kind of shepherd's star for superior natures that conducts, those who do not lose sight of it, in the path of posterity.

EUGÈNE MONTROSIER





## ÉMILE VAN MARCKE



Émile van Marcke was born at Sèvres, in 1829. His father, who belonged to an old Flemish family had been a pupil of Watelet and was well known, in Belgium, as a landscape painter. His mother, who was French, was also an artist and had acquired the reputation of a flower painter of talent, and had received a medal at the yearly Salons where she exhibited.

So it may be said that from his cradle the child saw and constantly heard discussed subjects pertaining to art, and it was not astonishing that from his infancy he showed a marked taste that but developed as he grew older. His parents were delighted at the inclination he showed towards an art they both followed and far from opposing this inborn propensity for

painting only sought to direct it in the best methods. It was at the Liege drawing school that van Marcke made his first studies in painting; for his parents had been obliged to leave Sèvres, and to inhabit Belgium, whilst he was yet an infant.

He carried off all the prizes that a pupil could obtain in his school, but the advice that he received from his parents, the practical experience that he imbibed in his family contributed more than all the rest to the early developement of his natural qualities. What is very certain is that



his commencements did not show the hesitations and searchings about that so often retard young artists. For whilst still very young he was sufficiently master of the technical part of his art to, if necessary, make it a profession.

This necessity soon appeared as van Marcke, who married young was



earlyburdened  
with a family.  
He married the  
daughter of Mr.  
L. Robert, —  
a distinguish-  
ed chemist —  
who had for a  
long time been  
connected with  
the Sèvres ma-

nufactory. In addition to the scientific studies that Mr. Robert's had made under the direction of Brongniart and Dumas, he had been initiated from his childhood in artistic matters, for he was the grand-son of Demaine, a distinguished painter who under the restoration made a great reputation by his pictures of landscape and animals.



It was on account of these different aptitudes that Mr. Robert was called upon to direct the department of painting at the Sèvres manufactory, where he became director at the death of Regnault. In marrying his daughter, van



Mareke was not obliged to change any of his tastes, but continued to live in the same artistic set in which he had been educated. Naturally, his father-in-law had no trouble in securing his services for the Sèvres ma-

nufactory where he remained nine years.

These laborious years were not lost time to the artist, whose talent was perfected and greatly increased, but his reputation gained but little for an artist who is connected with the Sèvres manufactory is rarely known to



the general public, his reputation does not extend ordinarily beyond the narrow circle of those who employ him by asking from him models or those who are painting in the same style and working beside him. Thus van Marcke was considered at the manufactory as a superior artist at an epoch when the greater part of the picture connoisseurs were ignorant of his existence.

However modest it may appear to the generality of people, the position that van Marcke occupied at the Sèvres manufactory and the innovations which he introduced there deserve to be signalized. He applied himself above all to the reproduction of landscapes and scenes with animals, in which the



natural accents formed a striking contrast with the conventional methods of which Sèvres had so carefully preserved the traditions. So that there he was considered as a revolutionist.

He decorated in this manner several large sized pieces in *pâte tendre* which were offered as gifts to foreign sovereigns, notably those that were offered to the queen of Holland and caused a sensation at the manufactory at the time of their appearance. As is well known the pro-

ducts of the national manufactory at Sèvres are not delivered to the commercial world, and it is only by the chance of their being found in the sales, made after death, of some great personage that they can be obtained in the market.

This explains the rarity of van Marcke's work in this style of painting :



the high estimation in which they held his talent was the reason why most of the pieces that he executed were given to very grand personages, whose families have almost always retained them, in this way they are never seen in public sales. Julius Cesar said that he preferred to be first in a small village to being second in Rome. This is a way of looking at life that every one does not agree with, and van Marcke in spite of the success he obtained at Sèvres dreamed of struggling on a larger field, and entering into competition with more robust athletes. He had acquired his place as a decorator of china, and now he aspired to take position among the painters whose pictures were exhibited each year at the Salon and occupied public opinion.

Troyon, whose father had been connected with the Sèvres manufacture and who in his youth had been destined to follow the same career, was then at the height of his reputation, and his example was very tempting. Troyon lived in Paris, but as his mother had always remained at Sèvres, he came there regularly each week to spend a day.



He had taken a liking to van Mareke, and continually told him that he had regained his marshals' wand as a painter on china, but that the artistic field was limitless, and an artist ought not to be satisfied so long as there was hope of reaching a higher plane. On his side, van Mareke would not leave a certainty for the uncertain, and he decided to remain at Sèvres until his reputation as a painter of pictures was made.



In the exhibition catalogues, Van Mareke signs himself as a pupil of Troyon although his early studies as an artist, were made independent of this master for whom he always professed the most profound admiration.

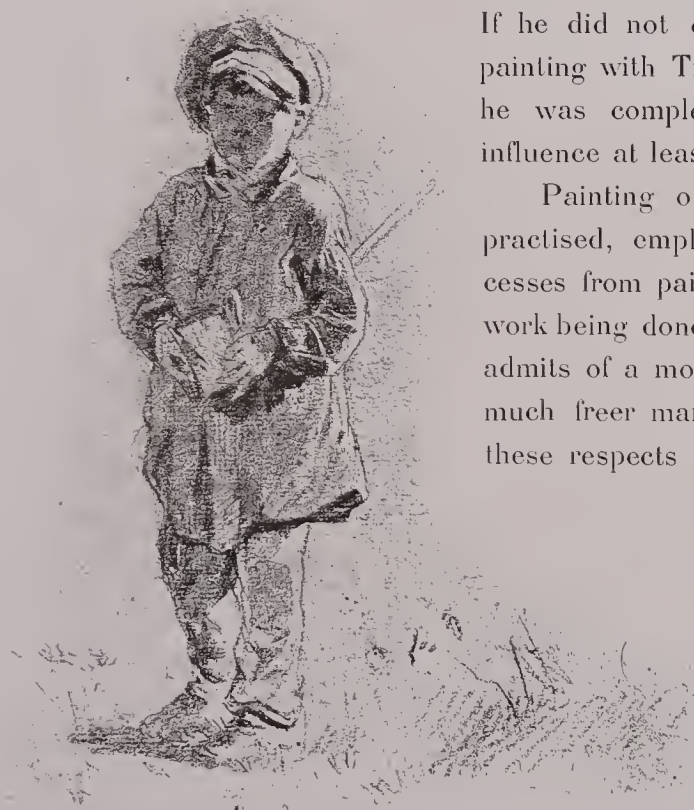
If he did not commence the study of painting with Troyon, it is certain that he was completely submitted to his influence at least in his earlier pictures.

Painting on china, that he first practised, employs very different processes from painting in oils, where the work being done generally more largely, admits of a more expressive touch and much freer manner, Troyon was in all these respects an admirable artist, and

van Mareke, who like his master painted landscape and animals, soon completely assimilated his manner.

This was a great benefit to him for thus he at once arrived with-

out hesitation at the end he was pursuing. But this affinity of talent and manner of working also had serious inconveniences which van Mareke soon perceived. He made his first appearance at the Salon of 1857 with a picture





entitled : "Neighbourhood of Villeneuve-l'Étang". This picture was much talked of, but they did not fail to say that the artist strongly resembled Troyon and this was a criticism with which both the press and connoisseurs did not fail to attack the artist.

Troyon, who had so loyally held out a helping hand to van Marcke became, without his consent the instrument with which they overwhelmed his friend. It is worth while to note in passing that most artists, almost without exception, recall in their first works the manner of the master whose counsels they have followed. But as the first appearances of artists are rarely remarkable the public gives but little attention, and the painter's personality is already liberated when the crowd learns to pronounce his name. Van Marcke had success with his first picture, but this success could not fail to create envy, and those envious of him said that he had everything except originality.

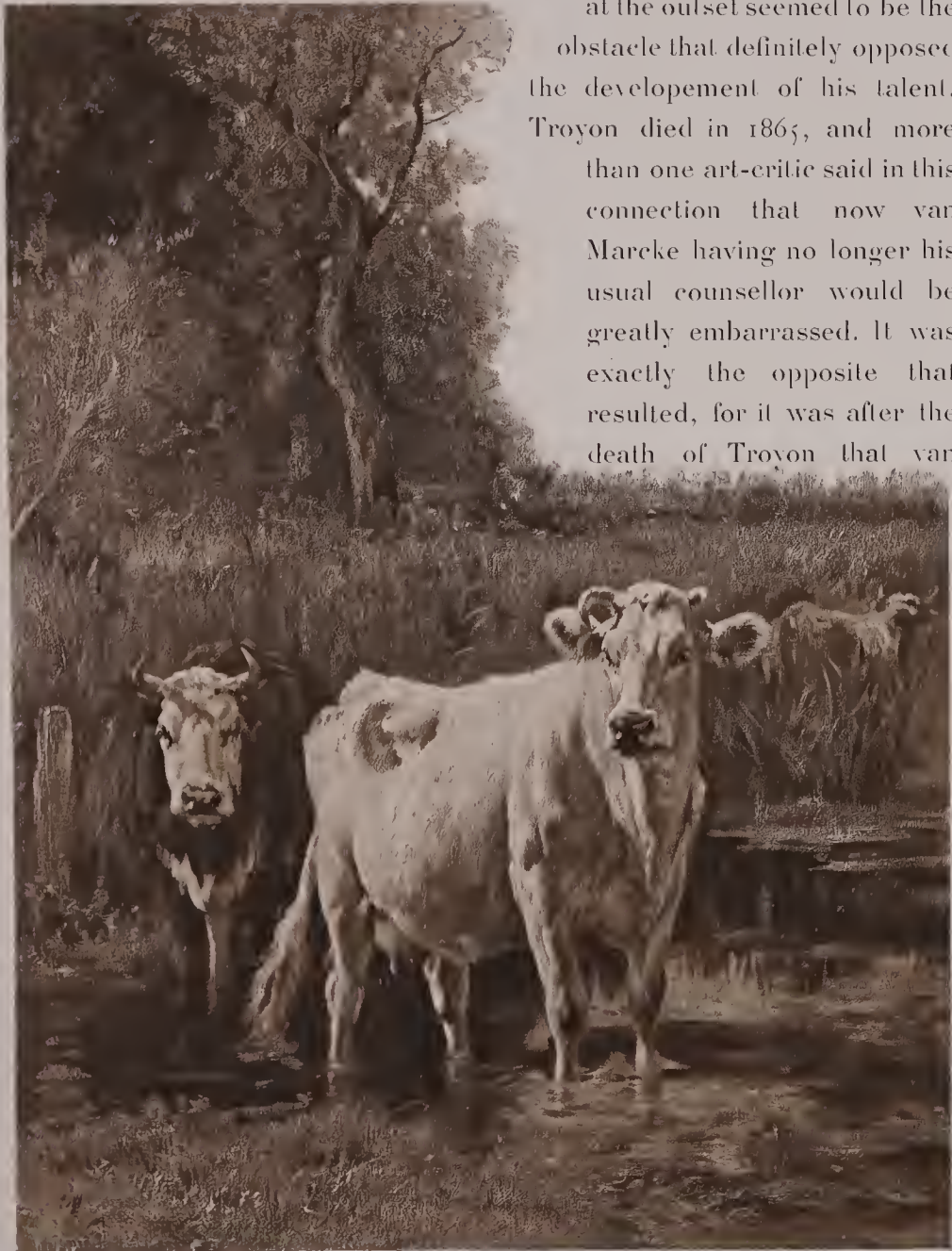
This was in reality the stumbling block against which the reputation of van Marcke clashed as long as Troyon lived. Those who liked his painting and they were numerous, could find no better compliment to offer him than to say : it is worthy of Troyon. Those who desired to under rate his work, whilst however recognizing his incontestable qualities said : without doubt it is good but it is only a reflection, and I prefer the original.

Vainly the painter avoided visiting Normandy where Troyon usually worked, vainly he frequented daily other artists of different style of talent, like Diaz with whom he was very intimate, and Théodore Rousseau and many others, it was Troyon with whom they always reproached him. His



reputation was being made but in a secondary manner; amateurs who were not rich enough to have pictures by Troyon made themselves amends with the pictures of van Marcke and many believed the artist was condemned to remain always in a secondary rank. Troyon who had been so useful to him

at the outset seemed to be the obstacle that definitely opposed the development of his talent. Troyon died in 1865, and more than one art-critic said in this connection that now van Marcke having no longer his usual counsellor would be greatly embarrassed. It was exactly the opposite that resulted, for it was after the death of Troyon that van











Mareke really achieved his personality. As fast as he effaced the souvenir of his friend he saw nature in a more direct manner and interpreted more and more according to his own temperament.

His master had taught him to render the grand aspects of nature and to reproduce masses as a whole. But his own nature pushed him rather to the study of bits, so without losing any of his acquired qualities he joined to them others which he owed to his personal impressions.

He went during several years to Grignon, our celebrated agricultural school, where he found as many animals as he wished, and where he could



also give himself up to a through study of anatomy. It was thus that he was able to know thoroughly the internal figure of the animal, and to express not only its general shape but the frame of bones and the particular construction of each detail.

It is certain that it was only after the death of Troyon that the reputation of van Mareke was solidly established with the public, that it was only when his friend was no longer there to sustain him with his counsel and influence that he obtained all the recompenses, that have been like the consecration of his always increasing reputation.

Van Mareke acquired his medals in 1867, 1869 and 1870 : he was decorated with the Légion d'honneur in 1872 and received a first medal at the Universal Exhibition of 1878. Unfortunately the engravings that we give from his pictures, however carefully they may be executed, can only give an incomplete idea of this artist's works, whose principal merit is above all the charm of color and aspect.

As to descriptions that might be made of them with a pen, they would be forcibly much below what the author would wish to express, and with



an artist, in the style of him who now occupies us, the writer is forced to acknowledge to himself the insufficiency of the means at his disposal. With an historical picture or an anecdotic scene, the critic can speak of the subject chosen by the painter and the manner in which he has understood and interpreted it, can place himself more directly in connection with his inward thought, but what is to be said of the representation of a country scene in which animals always form the principal element?

Evidently the pictures of van Mareke differ greatly one from another, but this difference is in the disposition of the lines in the landscape, the

form of the clouds, the outline of the trees, the spontaneous groupings that the animals have taken in the fields, and that the artist has more or less successfully depicted. But the primary idea of the picture revolves necessarily in a rather uniform circle because as the artist seeks his impressions direct from nature the scenes he sees and reproduces are those that respond most nearly to his natural temperament.

Even the titles, that the artist gives to each of his pictures, indicate his taste for rural sites, whose ever calm appearance is designed to give



pleasure to the eye rather than to excite the mind. In 1876, he exhibited "The Falaise"; in 1877, "The Source of Neslette", in Normandy; in 1878, "The Ford at Mouthiers"; in 1879, "Pasturage at Soreng"; in 1880, "The Fields of Courbet"; and in 1881, a "Corner of a farm", a remarkable picture that was again exhibited at the National Salon of 1883.

The impression that is given from all these canvases is always that of a quiet happiness free from care: I cannot better describe it than by comparing it to the peaceful feeling that takes possession of the inhabitants of a big city when the summer having arrived they find themselves suddenly in the



midst of summer haunts and green fields. His talent is in a certain way like the springtime, for van Marcke is never so happy as when the rich grasses are being trodden down by cows, and he can cause to bloom in their midst some delicate toned flowers or large green leaves still wet with the morning dew.

For the rest, the groups of animals that he shows us ruminating in the fields in his pictures appear like a beautiful bouquet of color. And the artist always seems to be preoccupied with the desire to show the variety of tints there are in the animals' coats from white to brown, yellow or a reddish hue.



Normandy is his chosen sketching ground; it is in fact the most fertile country in pasture lands, where the animals offer the richest and most varied colors. After having made studies in several localities, van Marcke has settled upon the beautiful valley of Tréport so dear to tourists. The rich fields through which in numerous serpentine lines winds a limpid little river, offer superb horizon effects sometimes reaching to that line of the sea, where the fisher's boats with their brown sails stand out from the sky, and again touching the wooded hills that crown the forest of Eu, whose thick growth of old trees contrasts finely with the fresh greenness of the fields.

He possesses here a farm with animals belonging to him, that he can



have pose as he wishes, without being exposed to the pestering of the peasants, who never regard with a favorable eye the stranger who installs himself in the midst of their cattle.

However, in spite of the studies made at the Grignon school, van Mareke is probably, as far as getting profit from the soil is concerned a very indiffer-

ent farmer. Without having seen him thus occupied, I am certain, that on market days when he purchases a cow, he chooses it more on account of its beauty of form and the color of its hair than in view of the profit that may be drawn from it.



I remember the mocking hilarity that Troyon excited among some country folks one day when he had tied up to paint a cow of a magnificent tawny tone, but which was not considered of much value by the farmer-people. "This gentleman, they said, has chosen to represent in his picture the only worthless cow that there is in the whole pasture." Effectively, this cow was so valueless as a milk giver that they were fattening her for the butcher. It is true that her coat was superb in color, but that was a quality not appreciated by the country-people.



It is to this rural dwelling in Normandy, that van Mareke retires each year to spend the summer season and make numerous studies which will afterwards serve for pictures. As soon as the winter arrives, the man of the fields disappears to be transformed into the citizen, in place of animals in the midst of fields, the painter returns to Paris to occupy the fine house

that he has had built in the Champs-Élysées quarter. It is a complete transformation, and the only reminders that we find here of the country are those that the artist retraces in his pictures. He himself is changed, in place of the observer always in search of a new open-air effect, we find a refined gentleman, full of taste, that with the most perfect courtesy does the honors of his atelier to the numerous visitors who frequent it. And this atelier is charming, with its grand Renaissance chimney piece, its choice furniture and the easels on which are always to be found some canvases brilliantly sketched in.

The life of this artist, entirely consecrated to work offers us in fact but few incidents worthy to be related, it is only by his works that he is connected with the history of art. Personally van Marcke has an excessively upright nature and is absolutely sympathetic in character.

As he came into the world in the midst of an artistic family, so we leave him with his two sons-in-law who are also painters and have already taken their place amongst men of talent.

RENÉ MÉNARD





## JEAN-PAUL LAURENS



It was not until the Salon of 1872 that the general public, until then rather inattentive to the pictures of Jean-Paul Laurens, were at last forced to admire them. The young artist exhibited that year two canvases : *The Death of the duc d'Enghien* and *The Pape Formosa*. Great was the astonishment, and the critics who, as usual, had not discovered this talent, in presence of these two historical pages painted with such powerful energy, at once sounded their most resounding trumpets.

Jean-Paul Laurens was born in a small village of Lauraguais, at Fourquevaux, about 1838. He passed his childhood wandering about the thorny pathways of his province enjoying the delights of playing truant whilst his father and brother pottered about at work



in the sun. His mother, whom he unfortunately lost while yet young, in dying had dropped beside her bed a catechism, the boy took possession of this ancient volume and concealed it in his pocket. Every morning he started out with his precious relic, about noon when his comrades, whom he had led far afield were satiated with the blackberries, sloes and all sorts of fruits they found in the hedges crept into the brushwood to sleep quietly, he reclining on the grass under the slight shade of an almond tree, instead of abandoning himself to the delights of a noonday nap, fixed



his wide awake eyes upon the pages of his mother's book turning them over one after the other with such a heartache that often caused the tears to fall.

One afternoon whilst turning over and still turning his mother's ancient volume, our vagabond discovered an engraving, that held him spell bound, it was a *Nativity* from Carlo Vanloo. Laurens whose recent irreparable loss had made him tender hearted could not for a long time endure the sight of this engraving; he closed the book and tried to forget it. But the next day his troublous thoughts returned to him

and after having studied for long minutes the picture that had so upset him the day before, he whose hand was hardly capable of forming the letters of the alphabet tried to copy Vanloo's *Nativity*. Who suggested the idea to him? Nobody. In attempting to make his first sketch out of doors amongst the bare plains of Lauraguais, Jean-Paul Laurens obeyed a voice like that, that had long before amongst the arid fields of Vespignano been heard by the goatherd Giotto, tracing the profile of his goats on the rocks, that imperious voice : vocation.

One morning in the month of May 1851, Fourquevaux was suddenly awakened by a noise produced by rattling of old iron and songs loudly shouted.



In this small market-town, accustomed like all small towns in the south of France to music and songs, was this a real or a mock serenade? In a



moment these rustic people were stirring and each was soon peering out from his threshold; looking towards the distance where through the early morning mist was to be seen three robust fellows from whose wide open mouths came a deafening uproar. Behind these singers was to be seen an enormous tun-bellied mule with hanging ears rather mangy drawing a disjointed cart.

“ My friends ”, said the priest also appearing before his parsonage and addressing his parishioners, these gentlemen just arrived are italian painters who have come to paint our church.

Laurens soon knew the names of the three new arrivals, and then all his talk was of Antonio Boccaferrata who seemed to be the chief of the band and the Pedraja brothers, Giovanni and Filippo. He prowled constantly about the church slipping in as occasion offered, trying to be useful to the decorative artists by climbing ladders to carry them water, tobacco, matches or big cornets of colors.

Oh! that one! said he as one day he remained stationary in admiration before a head that Boccaferrata had just laid in with four strokes of his brush.



- You recognise that one? Antonio asked him?
- It his Judas.
- From Viner, little one.

— It is very fine, all the same stammered the child, it is very fine!  
The Italien was touched.

— Would you, by chance, like to be a painter my boy?

— Ah! if my father would allow me.

— But would you like it?

— Yes, Sir, he murmured his blond hair ruffled by the passing wind.

— Precisely, we need an apprentice Master, interposed Filippo Pedraja.

— What is your name? asked Antonio.

— Jean-Paul.

— And your father what is his name?

— Laurens.

— Where is your father?

— In the fields.

— And your mother?

— She is dead.



seeing Boccaferrata, Giovanni and Filippo paint. During a halt that the troupe made in Bousca to rest and take note of orders that had arrived

— Let us go and find your father.



— That same evening, Jean-Paul Laurens was intrusted to Antonio Boccaferrata and a few weeks later having aided the brothers Pedraja to harness the mule into the cart he left Fourquevaux.

This was a new life. The italien decorators had their head quarters at Toulouse, in the neighbourhood of the Grand Rond in the quarter called the *Bousca*. From there they travelled all about the country even to the most hidden valleys of Corbières and the Pyrenees. Laurens was radiant, so many pleasures at once: he was travelling and

during their absence our young hero who had escaped from Fourquevaux but who more than once had visited a relative living in Toulouse, a printer by trade, asked and obtained permission to go and see his uncle Benoit. To be able to announce that henceforth he need not work in the fields as his father and brother did, that he would not be obliged to handle the spade only the brush! His uncle Benoit encouraged him to do his best, above all to show himself obedient to the masters who had taken charge of him, then slipping a silver piece into his hand sent him back.

The next day, a sultry august day found them travelling towards Sainte-Anne du Salut, Boccaferrata and the brothers Pedraja were called to this parish to paint a death of sainte Anna. It was in this never to be forgotten place that young Laurens, first had the pleasure of grinding colors for the italiens, then of turning enormous brushes in the heavy buckets overflowing with red, blue or yellow saucers that cast such dazzling reflections.



What strength of arm, what energy of good will he showed, the poor child! I also, he thought, I shall some day climb scaffolding and like Mr. Boccaferrata like Giovanni and Filippo I shall paint saints on the walls.

At last the death of sainte Anna was finished, and they had also decorated with a starry sky the church of Montgauch, a hamlet near Saint-Girons, as yet the master who in taking Laurens as an apprentice had promised to teach him his art, had not given him a single lesson.



When he realised that a year had elapsed since he left Fourquevaux, the child until now talkative and gay became silent and sad. Day by day, in spite of his efforts his pleasant dream was gradually dissipated; and the reality, in its terrible bareness, appeared before him. For example, in the early times when he was under the influence of "those angels": his illusions, his feet hardly seemed to touch the ground, the italiens seemed to him to be amiable, kind and very indulgent. Now in the midst of his trials and his want of occupation he saw their real character, and discovered as time passed more than one fault. Boeeaferrata was quick-



tempered and violent, Giovanni had white rages that made the lookers on tremble, they both drank heavily. And when their brushes would fall from their fingers and their eyes were red and inflamed with drunkenness, a word, a nothing, would produce a storm a of blows. Filippo, certainly did not merit to be placed in a niche as a saint, but a native kindness preserved him from brutalities like those of his brother and the patron, and caused our youngster from Fourquevaux to attach himself by preference to Filippo.

At last Antonio Boeeaferrata decided to confide some bits of vellum and a pencil to Laurens, then tracing a profile said to him "copy that for me" What enthousiasm! The poor little fellow in trying to draw, again felt, as in early days lifted from the ground by "those angels". Unfortunately the hours when the patron would consent to occupy himself with his apprentice were rare. One day, when he was timidly asking a counsel from his master, not daring to ask for a lesson, he pointing to an old shabby portfolio cried: "Take some engravings from there and do not tease me." He took some, then took others applying himself perseveringly to reproduce what he saw.



Month after month Laurens life passed away in melancholy and increasing sadness "If I could run away" he said to himself one evening in the village of Gajean, after a scene with Giovanni Pedraja. — "Run away where"? he did not know. Just then he was called to supper, he took his place at the table, but ate nothing.

— You are not hungry then, little one? asked the patron as he took his place, when the repast was finished, for his regular game at *écarté*.

— No, I am not hungry.

He went to a dark corner to find the portfolio of prints and as he had done other evenings he arranged himself not far from the candle to work. His movements were like those of a somnambulist. When he had laid out on a chair before him the engraving of Titens

"Christ at the tomb" he placed in his lap the copy that he had commenced but instead of seizing his pencils, and as if he were powerless to pursue his work he sat staring vaguely into space.

So you have not supped, my lad? questioned Boccaferrata as he picked up a trick.

— I had no appetite, master.

— That's bad, that is bad....

Giovanni, the foolish, brutal Giovanni furtively slipped his hand into the boy's lap and pulled away the drawing tearing it.

— Wicked wretch! cried

Laurens, starting up ready to throw himself upon his enemy but Boccaferrata and Filippo seized him.

— You are cowards! You are cowards! he cried struggling to get free and then starting off at full speed he disappeared.

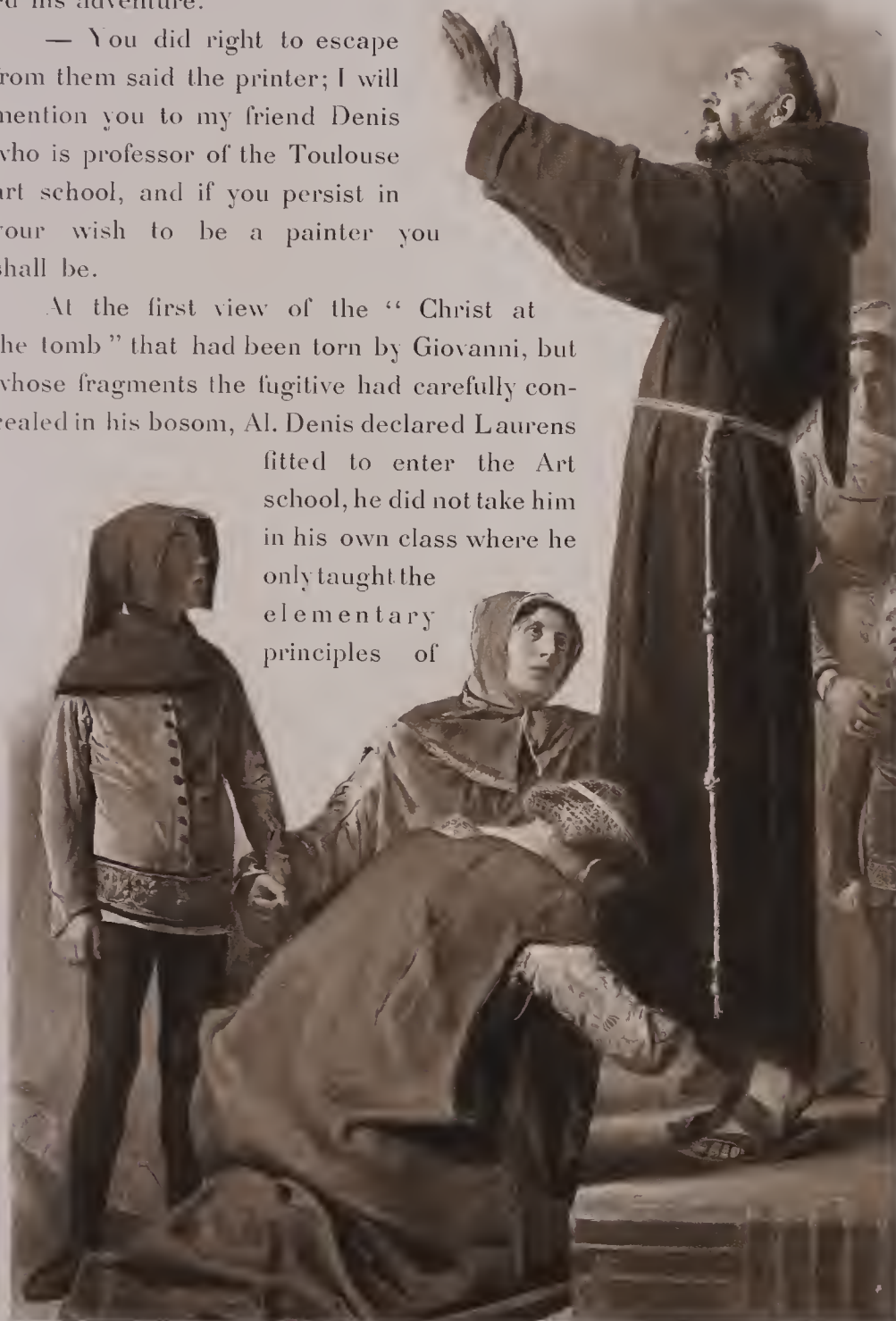
— One fine morning uncle Benoit received at Toulouse a dusty,



hungry trembling nephew, what had happened to him! Laurens recounted his adventure.

— You did right to escape from them said the printer; I will mention you to my friend Denis who is professor of the Toulouse art school, and if you persist in your wish to be a painter you shall be.

At the first view of the “ Christ at the tomb ” that had been torn by Giovanni, but whose fragments the fugitive had carefully concealed in his bosom, Al. Denis declared Laurens fitted to enter the Art school, he did not take him in his own class where he only taught the elementary principles of





Jos. Paul Lautens  
1911





drawing, but he caused him to be accepted in a higher class than his, under professor Villemsens. What joy, what an intoxication the first day in this famous school produced! How well provided for they were here with portfolios full of prints and boxes full of pencils! And then, then some were painting. Would he ever be permitted, as some of his comrades were doing, to stand before an easel with palette, maul-stick and brushes?

This long caressed dream was finally realized one fine afternoon when professor Villemsens who rather spoilt his pupil brought him into his atelier Place Roubaix.

— Paint! he said to him.

— I! stammered Laurens startled. Mr. Villemsens seized a bit of charcoal and having drawn in a head in large lines :

— There is your head, paint it in. And he left him abruptly. When Laurens was alone, he hastened to arrange on a stool the palette and brushes and to wipe the perspiration from his forehead! He was in a pitiable state. "It is too difficult, he murmured, it is too difficult." And with his head bowed on his breast and his arms crossed,



he remained inert overpowered by the terrible weight of powerlessness thus acquiring by the means of his unusual precocity an intuition of the tortures that art, the formidable monster, imposes on those who are so imprudent as to give their lives to be devoured.

At rare intervals Laurens received a few crowns from Fourquevaux, and always on the paper that carefully enveloped them were to be found two or three lines. "Will your trade soon be successful? When will you paint churches like the Italiens?... For us we have confidence and will do what we can." These words affectionate and at the same time cruel pierced the young man's soul and brought tears to his eyes. Ah! to be able to gain his livelihood! One sunday a retired captain

who took his daily walk on the Grand Rond where he had often seen Laurens sketching in his notebook a passing visage, asked him if he would undertake to paint his portrait in oils. The bargain was soon made and the artist received thirty francs. Some time after another windfall! A picture dealer, in the rue Saint-Rome, Mr. Biscartel, ordered from him a copy of the picture of "Craye" and slipped three twenty francs pieces into his hand. — I'm getting on, he said rubbing his hands quite delighted. Now all that is necessary is that I should succeed in the concours of the school and so be sent to Paris", and then he burst out laughing at his foolish dreams.



Six months later Jean-Paul Laurens was at the height of his desires. The school of fine-arts conferred on him the prize for painting and sent him to Paris.



Three years of life assured and that assured life in Paris, it was greater happiness than Laurens had ever dared hope for. Henceforth what long visits to the Louvre paying homage before Veronese, Titians and Ribera! and what earnest work! From this enthusiastic contemplation of the old masters, and hard daily work resulted a first picture full of promise. In the Salon of 1863 our young painter exhibited the *Mort de Caton d'Utique*. In this first attempt, to which the jury awarded a *mention honorable*, there were exceptional

qualities of strength. Unfortunately, with this mention honorable on vellum; which but spurred him on to future conquests in the difficult art he had chosen our toulousian pensioner received another paper, that announced

that he had received his last quarter's allowance, and that in future he must count upon his work to live.

Work to live! How should he do it? what would become of him? He was afraid and all sort of sinister ideas haunted his brain. Whilst he was in this tragic mood one day as he was searching among the old books that are to found the length of the quais he by chance came across a book entitled : *Considérations*

*sur les causes de la grandeur des Romains et de leur décadence.* He read a few lines, and through the firm, sober language of Montesquieu he saw Tiberius. Why having attempted the "Death of Cato" should he not attempt the "Death of Tiberius"? The picture figured at the Salon of 1864. The canvas showed sincerity in the arrangement, and energy in general expression, but it was wanting in brilliancy and was but little remarked.



About this time our artist who was troubled with anxious cares, withdrew, from the too noisy comrades with whom he had worked rue de l'Ouest, and installed himself on the sixth floor in the rue Chabrol. It was in this small lodging, through the medium of a mutual friend Antonin Mulé in the early part of the year 1866 that I knew Jean-Paul Laurens. I can still see the tall young man, with blond beard and hollow cheeks, cold grey eyes and a rather flat nose who received me at the door not without a slight embarrassment. A big canvas encumbered the atelier. The painter showed and explained to me his new creation. An angel offering Jesus a crown of thorns.



The figure of the Nazareen did not impress me much; but in return the kneeling angel with inclined head seized hold of and vividly affected me. In talking of his art our man became genial. He opened his portfolios and showed me some drawing of biblical subjects. The compositions were generally largely conceived and the lines ample, sincere and imposing. I was astonished.

The Salons of 1867 and 1868 where Laurens exhibited. "A young girl dead", "Voice in the desert", "Herodius and her daughter", and "the



portrait of the author" of this study were a step in advance in drawing which became larger with a facility of line capable of enveloping, and causing to vibrate, all forms. Unfortunately the color remained pale and wanting in relief. Here and there notes appeared announcing surprising powers as an instinctive colorist but these were undecided, embarrassed, deadened by souvenirs of the school. In spite of cruel deceptions, he went to work again with energy and in the month of May 1869 he had his first success: *Jésus guérissant un démoniaque* was medaled... What joy!

In the exaltation that a recompense carried by force in the struggle produced, Laurens conceived and executed "Jesus driven from the Synagogue" this was a decisive step, this picture was powerful not only by its clever grouping of personages, by the quality of the types realized but also by a brilliancy of tone that the artist had never before been able to show in an equal degree. Color, that famous color, so long sought after, because there is no painting without it, he had at last found it, he now held it. Then the dreadful war of 1870 was declared.

When after the terrible disasters, Laurens tried to begin work again, he hesitated as to the subject to be attacked. His head, like all others in France only dreamed of new combats; it seemed to him impossible that some glorious

revenge was not in reserve. Under the effect of these tragic dreams he drew a number of drawings that he threw to the crowd as notes of his burning patriotism. But these noble preoccupations of the fatherland bending beneath unknown dreams soon developed into works of a higher and at the same time more personal character. According to Laurens the crime, of France slain on the field of battle, had two authors: The Empire that had declared the war without having prepared for it; the church, who having estranged Italy from us prevented her coming to our aid. It was from this double thought, inflated by the irritations of defeat that was born the "Death of the due of Enghien" and the "Pope Formose". Our painter had now conquered his place in the front ranks.

With the "Pool of Bethesda," exhibited in 1873, Laurens returned to religious subjects. Nothing could be better or more largely executed than this sober and strong canvas with earnest accents. Around the water in the pool, that a melancholy looking angel is softly agitating, are grouped about twenty personages in most picturesque attitudes. From the rather dark background, rendered more opaque by the shadow that is thrown by the large wings of the divine messenger, a multitude is pressing forward a few of these unfortunates succeed in separating themselves from the mass, and almost touch the regenerating water. It is for these upon whom the singularly obscure light of this sinister place falls that the master having painted with vigor the physiognomies in the background reserved all the daring of his brushes.

After having appeared to us as terrible, Jean-Paul Laurens at the Salon of 1874 showed himself kind, affectionate almost tender with his "Cardinal", "Portrait of Martha", "Saint-Bruno refusing the offerings of



Roger, count de Calabre". This last work where for the third time our painter made a hit, procured for him the cross of chevalier of the Legion d'honneur. My friend was greatly interested in the History of the Church, the catholic idea that spreads from the banks of the Tiber to the extremities of the Universe. In these preoccupations he found "The Excommunication of Robert le Pieux" and "Interdicted". But suddenly Laurens changed his style and attempted military pictures: "The austrian staff-officers before the body of Marceau" which impressed the jury, as it had the public, and they awarded the highest recompense at their disposal: the *médaille d'honneur*.

Since 1880 the "Death of sainte Geneviève" is the master's principal work in it he has raised himself to the highest point, serenity and strength hold equal place. The splendid edition of *Récits mérovingiens*, published by Hachette and C<sup>o</sup> shows us how well he understands the gallo-romaine world. The certainty that Jean-Paul Laurens when the "Death of sainte Geneviève" is placed in the Pantheon will be counted amongst the most vigorous of the french school assures us that his name will be consecrated by posterity.

FERDINAND FABRE.







## F.-A. BRIDGMAN



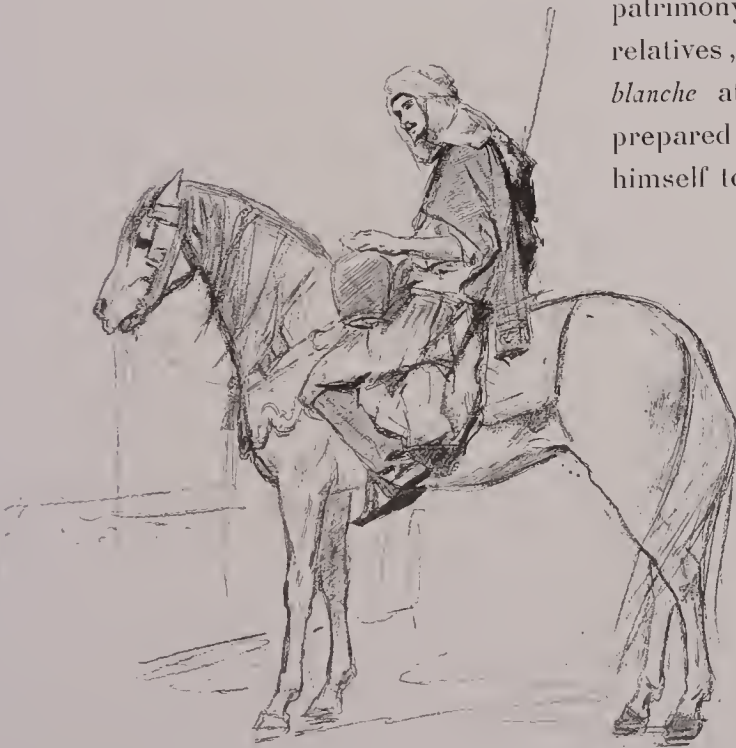
Very few of those whose ancestors went out to make new worlds in distant oceans succeed in placing themselves once again in Europe under favorable conditions. Colonisation seldom forgives. It receives back hardly one in a million of those it sends out. To regain a place in the drawing-rooms of Europe, to ally himself with the families of his ancestors' friends, or even to make a successful living on the old shores, is generally denied to the son of the colonist. The ancient civilisation puts out the emigrant at the door gladly enough, with God-speed and the best wishes for a grand career, but that career is understood to be forward and not backward, and when the descendant returns the door of his father's house is shut.

This consideration lends peculiar interest to the handful of successful men in Europe who derive from colonial sources. Here even the millionaire

colonist has a hard enough rôle to play, although backed with gold and success; Europe hardly ever accepts him seriously, or as anything but an exotic; yet in many an instance he has contrived first to dazzle, then to be examined, then embraced. Far rarer and far more curious is the colonist who audaciously treats Europe as a country to be exploited, and, arriving as an emigrant without fortune, contrives to plant himself prosperously, just as if he were a settler alighted among solitudes not hostile, and forests not prejudiced. We see but few such successful persons; but in every instance we find in them something original, something interesting in character, the stamp of individuality we should naturally argue from the career.



As for Bridgman, he is the type in its purity. He had no family aid, no patrimony, no circle of European relatives, no preparation, no *carte blanche* at a Paris banker's, no prepared success. If he sees himself today invited to take his



place in a circle of twenty-four chosen French artists, if his name figures on the wall-plaques of the Exposition Nationale, if he has delightful social relations, and blushes to find himself in the Legion of honor, it is no presumption in his own character that pushes him there, but

the warm welcome of his foreign friends that instals him there.

If the individual sometimes succeeds, the art he carries with him is not often colonial in quality. To prosper, he had better glide into the European

current of ideas with respectable pasticcios rather than with an emigrant's dialect and a truant's provincialisms. Yet it cannot be denied that there are



signs of an American invasion of Europe, even in the matter of style. This reversal of the current of colonisation seems to be commencing in the affairs of literature. English letters are beginning to bloom with exotic plants. This was never the intention of the mother-race. At the separation of the colonies, England proposed to sow the fields of the colonial intellect with salt, and never to see a herb sprout from the transplanted stock. Who

would read an American book? Yet the grain began to bloom, the grass began to forgive, plants began to push forward that did not acknowledge the stipulated patterns and the consecrated seed, and at last the romancer

Henry James, like an Alpine harebell hung with tears, is found daring to innovate and to be adopted. He and his mates are quite provincial, they assert a law of taste that is not borrowed but is brought with them, they cry out for the need of a finer analysis, a keener perception, and the rejection of that rather coarse and clumsy impasto which is inherent in the most delicate English work, and British criticism is rather astonished to find itself craving for them and unable to finish its dinner without them.



But if there is modestly visible an adoption of pure American literature in England, we cannot hope yet for an adoption of pure American art



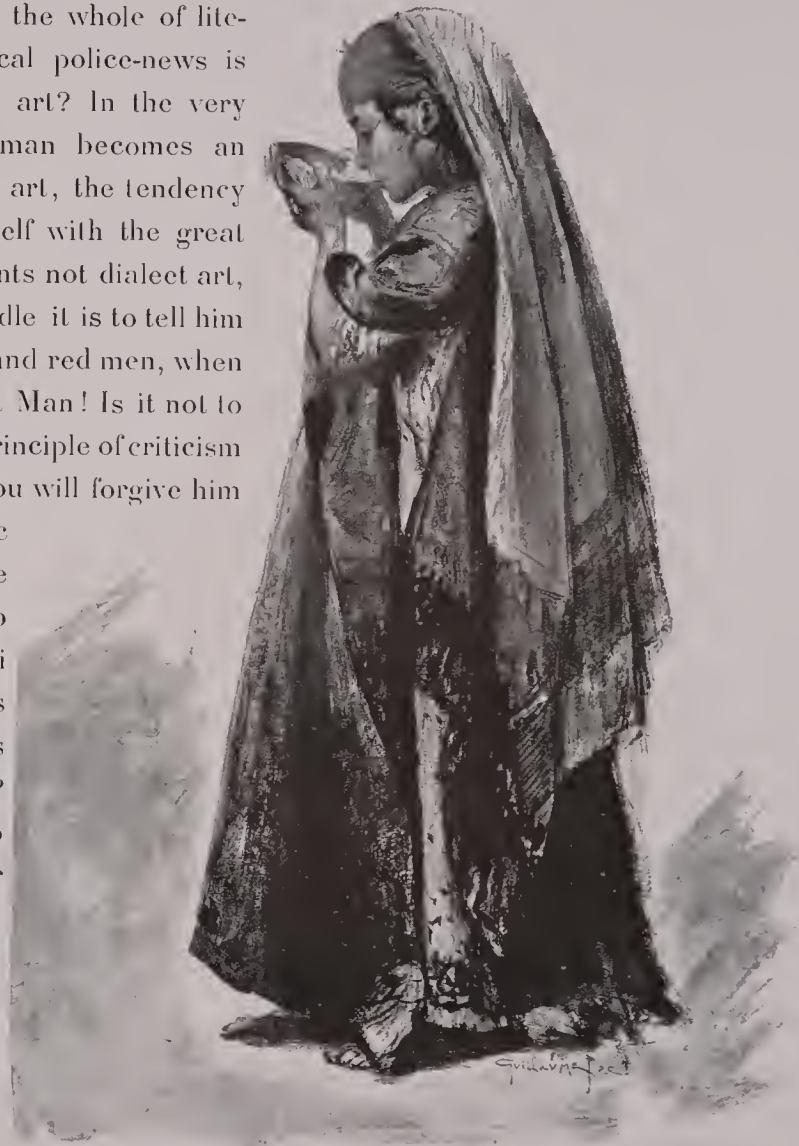
anywhere in Europe. Art is not national in the sense that literature is national, its language is one, and it descends from the great painters and sculptors of the past, whose accent it tries to follow, on whatever shore it exercises its faculty. The business of painters is simply to learn to paint well. If their minds are so constituted as to love their own countries better than they love the science of painting, they may become fit to paint their govern-



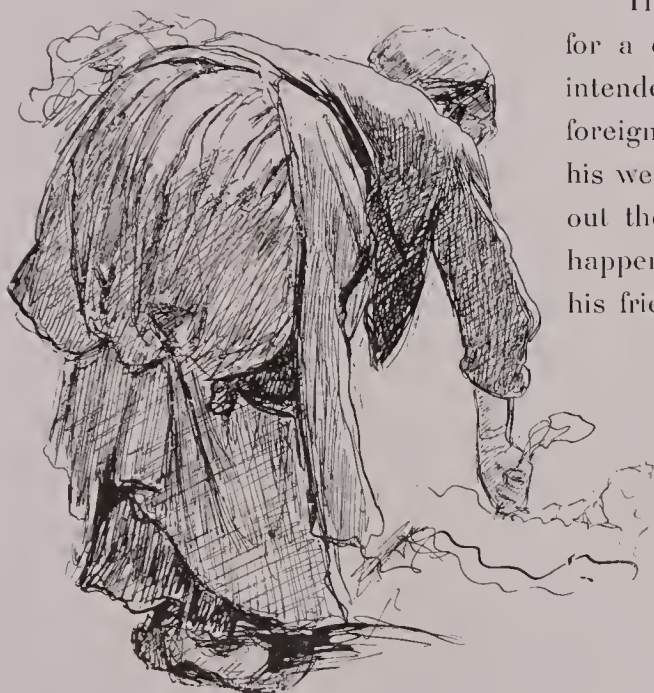
mental coats-of-arms, but they will not become fit to make pictures. Yet how often do we hear the colonist-painter urged to give the world the subjects of his native land! "Do not try to add to our collection of classical themes; give us your dialect." This is all very well for characters of a certain tendency; there is such a thing as a dialect art, and it is very piquant and real. But suppose he happens to be a

student. Is he to be debarred from the older sources of inspiration that are the inheritance of his race and of all civilized races? "Show us the manners of your native land," say the critics; "give us types of your Yankee railroad kings, your red Indians, your negro minstrels; allow us to travel without travelling, and to see a New-York political meeting without leaving the walls of the Salon. That will amuse us." This function will be accepted, perhaps, by a certain rank of artists; but never by the artists of highest capacity. Suppose the painter happens to love Homer

as well as you love him; has he not his share equal with yours in the inheritance of Homer? It is idle to tell him to dance with the plantation blacks, to talk through his nose with the New England school-teacher. Good heavens! do you suppose that folk-lore constitutes the whole of literature? That comical police-news is the only subject for art? In the very proportion that a man becomes an educated being, in art, the tendency grows to unite himself with the great current that represents not dialect art, but art itself. How idle it is to tell him to paint black men and red men, when he was born to paint Man! Is it not to debauch the whole principle of criticism to assure him that you will forgive him a great many artistic shortcomings if he will only consent to enliven your ennui with sincere sketches of provincial manners taken from the life? You persuade him to do so, you get your hour's amusement, and you sacrifice a painter. Some talents, undoubtedly, are made for reporter-work, and it will be always proper for certain artists of the United States to paint in dialect; but when others among them discover that they are more interested in the subjects of that Bible which their ancestors carried from England as the banner of their emigration, you will never hold back such painters from seeking their subjects in the tremendous Book which is the painter's classic,



and which has everywhere been the inspiration of artists no better acquainted than the American with Bible lands. Has anybody the pretension to say that if the United States ever contains great artists, these men will not paint from subjects of Palestine and subjects of Greece? Does not the very history of sacred art confute our critics? The greatest painters, did they not attack perpetually that Holy-Land to which they were completely provincial, and did they not build up the great schools with pictures which are no correct reports of manners, which are great simply because they seek greatness in the art of painting rather than in the art of mimicry?



This diatribe is a little strong for a chapter which is simply intended to introduce a very quiet foreign painter to a public already his well-wisher, and I would blot out the whole of it if it did not happen to be the plea of one of his friends who finds himself an

American and has studied with him in the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. We poor foreigners have heard from a thousand newspapers and *Gazettes* the benevolent advice to remain provincial, and to paint the customs of

the colonies, without attempting the classic. My subject is an artist who has not taken these benevolent hints, and I have tried to give the because. I rein in my forensic enthusiasm, and I begin with a personal reminiscence. As I do not find that the French critics whose acumen I so greatly admire give pictures from the inside of life in a Paris art-school — possibly *pour cause* — I may be indulged with introducing a little personal sketch of that kind.

Bridgman entered in 1866 that great dusty room in the Ecole des Beaux-Arts where some thirty of us were already working. Thirty students grouped in semi-circles around the model's platform; the inside row squatting on the



floor; those behind sitting on rush-bottomed tabourets; around these, a circle standing; and the most distant perched giddily on the stools; gray light slanting in from a single lofty window; mountains of broken easels in the corner; and everybody singing at the top of his voice Musset's, "Nous l'avons eu, votre Rhin allemand." If the person entering forgot to take off his hat for a single moment, a deafening chorus of "chapeau! chapeau!" Busy students exchanging technical remarks about the model: "Comme son talon est jaune! Les jours de pluie il a les chairs parfaitement vertes!" The intrusion of the *nouveau*, with his carton under his arm, followed by a commissionaire bearing the obligatory easel and stool, was heralded by a cry of joy from the class. "A freshman, a *nouveau*!" shouted Paul Lenoir and



Poilpot, Bricard and Heller and Blanc and Georges Becker, Jacque

*fils*, Kratké and Sara the obstreperous, Kaemmerer and Cure the industrious, Gauthier Sainte-Elme the "Poulet," and Rixens the "Crapaud" — "Un nouveau! Un nouveau!" The advent of a fresh sujet for hazing put everybody in good humor. The stranger had a boyish air, a boyish gravity, a direct way of looking you in the eyes, and one of those comely dark faces that do not reveal nationality. None made doubt that he was a French youth, and there was great joy at the prospect of his being tortured, made to sing absurd songs, placed on the model's stand

for plastic poses, and forced to fetch and carry fuel. But it was soon found that the new-comer's French was imperfect — that he was, in fact, an American. In that happy day, pupils from the United States were a rarity





at the school, and their rarity made them popular. By tacit consent, and under the expectation of a somewhat liberal *bien venu*, they were spared the usual hazing on entrance, and so Bridgman never had the advantage of that sort of seasoning. He settled down quietly to work after the model, and in his very disadvantageous position as a late-comer he had quietly made, by recess-time, a very fair outline. "It is a little hard and *pompier*," said our poor lost Paul Lenoir, our oracle, "but at least it is careful."



It was the habit to gather round the easel of a freshman at his first recess, and, if he were a Frenchman, some would invite him to sing a ribald song, some would crush his work with satire, and a third party would drive him after fuel contumeliously, like a beast of burden. Bridgman escaped ridicule for his design by care and by a business-like ability to work in a hubbub, and the other two trials by being an American, — from which privilege of nationality it happens that he and myself are among the few pupils who do not know where the Beaux-Arts firewood is kept.

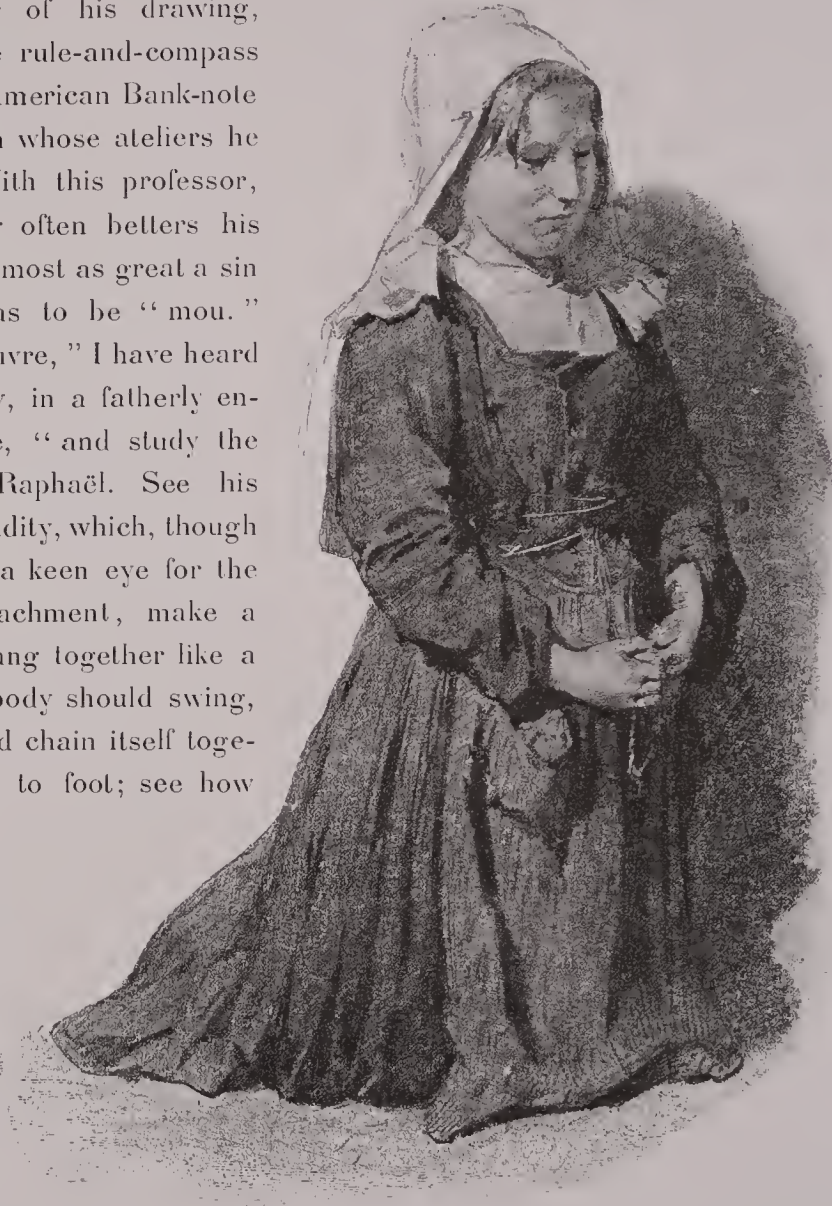
The young man was one of the most faithful laborers in the school, toiling







early and late, and rapidly ameliorating. Work was his dram after breakfast, his dram before dinner, and his dram between drams. M. Gérôme, the most conscientious of professors, had to correct him pitilessly for the dry and liney character of his drawing, redolent of the rule-and-compass poverty of the American Bank-note Company, from whose ateliers he had issued. With this professor, whose teaching often betters his example, it is almost as great a sin to be "sec" as to be "mou." "Go to the Louvre," I have heard M. Gérôme say, in a fatherly encouraging tone, "and study the drawings of Raphaël. See his freedom and fluidity, which, though combined with a keen eye for the points of attachment, make a whole figure hang together like a drapery. The body should swing, glide, curve, and chain itself together from head to foot; see how Raphaël expresses the binding and tying character of the joints, rather than their breaking and angular character." The American disciple had the keenness which perceives the value of a hint, and the application which quickly gets its own wheels out of a rut. His progress was swift, as his industry was a rebuke to all. It was truly painful to the less assiduous workers, — these being just the remaining thirty — to observe the unboastful



exactitude of the freshman, forever at his post, deterred by no weather, no dissipation, no sickness.

To Brittany, that summer, Bridgman carried the same observant dark



eyes, the same unshaken energy, and a rusty case containing a complaining violin. It was quite disgusting to those of us who accepted the country as a field for agreeable loafing, and

who were always going to do immense tasks tomorrow, to find the lad so business-like, assiduous, and good-natured. We obtained the keys of a deserted chateau, the chateau of Les Aven; it was not, even as a ruin, the most imposing of chateaux; but it had the lofty arch for the chariots alongside the narrow arch for the foot-passenger, and it had ivy, and it had walls slated down to the ground around the court, and, inside, it had wooden panels, and tower-staircases in the form of a screw, and very hideous Louis-Quinze salon-paintings, which like Arachne's web delineated "the crimes of the gods." Here Bridgman and his biographer and a dozen foreign pilgrims opened studio.

It was the first summer of the immense school of Americans at Pontaven, which has since grown to such prodigious popularity. Robert Wylie, perhaps the ablest American painter, and the first of them to receive a Salon medal of the second class, was the patriarch of this foreign settlement. He had been told of the beauty of Pontaven, dreaming on its thread of a river with "its fourteen mills and thirteen houses," by the genre painter Henry Bacon. In Les Aven, fixing on the room where floor was soundest and the light



was best, we opened studio, cajoling various villagers to sit for their portraits — Marie Morven, who owned such a beautiful red petticoat, Frangine Feutry, or the ancient man who had nearly a yard of straight black hair, but never a name but “le bonhomme.” Here we had visits



from such painters as were then addicted to Brittany — I remember Leleux and Eugène Leroux — who kindly criticised the studies which soon covered the walls. The models were docile, easily trained, and of original type; among them, young Grégoire Canivet, who had been caught on his knees, praying at a crowded Pardon in a neighbouring village, and brought home in triumph, was one of the most beautiful boys I ever saw, a pure Breton figure, full of nobility and race, fit for the portrait of the young Du Guesclin.

Such was the introduction to European life for this young American. Born in the Southern part of the United States — at Tuskegee in Alabama — but of New England and Puritan descent, the tyro had scarcely set foot in Europe before he found a good school and the antique scenery

of the Druids. No European can understand the absolutely religious enthusiasm of an American for the old countries of this continent. Born in a land that has none of the *patina* of antiquity, he sees in the ruined castles, the old churches, the Celtic *menhirs*, a realization of his dreams, a confirmation of his readings. He is a devotee, translated into the better world, and there finding the substance of his pious hopes and his sacred books suddenly

made real before his eyes. For me, this is the explanation of Bridgman's archæological pictures, his "Burial of a Mummy," his "Procession of the Bull Apis," his "Pastimes of an Assyrian King."

At present we find Bridgman occupying a delightful hôtel on the Boulevard Malesherbes, — living, in fact, in the full apotheosis of an American's dream. There are two studios, one of which he has furnished in the modern Eastern style, with every bibelot of an orientalist's fancy, the other in the monumental splendor of ancient Egypt. To his qualities of intelligence and tenacity he has had the prudence to add that other quality without



which these are worthless, that of good luck. At each crisis, he has contrived to be the man of the year. In 1877, for instance, the Committee of the Salon was still classical in feeling, the respected Bouguereaus and Cabanels were still powerful with their academic religion; and Bridgman was ready with his "Burial of a Mummy;" it procured him a third-class medal. In 1878, the same priesthood, agonized at the tottering of their dynasty, foresaw the invasion of the Manets and the Degas and the De Nittis, and desperately "raised the bid" for whatever was most academic, most scholastic; Bridgman was prepared; the "Mummy," after all, had been something dead, emblem of a closed career; but the "Bull Apis" was the best possible fetish, the image of a cult in which official dulness claimed its immortality; it obtained, of course, a second class medal; why not a first class?

In a few months, that same year, came the Universal Exposition, which, for art, was the last desperate assertion of the academic spirit. The Bouguereaus and Cabanels multiplied themselves, medalled themselves insanely, made Art stare at the sublimity of their self-assertion; the army of critics beat a retreat, laughing heartily. Of course Bridgman obtained a medal, and the Legion of Honor.



I should smile at this myself, did I not respect Bridgman heartily, and did I not know that he has reserves of strength which he is saving to use when most available. My artist, — and this is his secret — is at will an impressionist, and a glorious impressionist. His sketches in the East, his first thoughts for his pictures, are marvels of the purest impressionism. They have a breadth, a distinction in the tones, a simplicity of vision, a detachment from conventional points of sight, a hatred of bitumen, a solution

of the subject in its planes and breadths, that are marvellous. The artists, less enthusiastic over his “machines,” go to his sketches to admire and to learn. Bridgman could shade the fifty thousand spools of wool for a Cashmere shawl-weaver.

The following is a simple list of the facts appertaining to our artist; the modest Hesiod concludes thus the “works and days” of a conscientious laborer.

Salon of 1868, « Jeux Bretons »; 1869, « Le Pigeon Favori »; « Carnaval Breton »; 1870, « Le Cirque en Provence », « De quoi parlent les jeunes





filles » ; 1872, « Apollon et Cyrene » ; « Baie de Biscaye, pendant le beau temps » (voyage aux Pyrénées, en Algérie) ; « Récolte du maïs, près Bayonne » ; 1873 (voyage en Egypte) : « Conteuse nubienne au Harem » ; « Un Jour de calme dans la Haute-Egypte » ; « Marché à Dakéh » ; 1876, « Départ du Tapis Saint pour la Mecque » ; « Allah Akbah » ; « Conversation entre un Bédouin des Déserts et un Marchand de Tapis » ; 1877, « Funérailles d'une Momie » (médaillon 3<sup>e</sup> classe) ; 1878, « Procession du Bœuf Apis » (médaillon 2<sup>e</sup> classe ; médaille Exposition universelle ; croix de la Légion d'honneur) ; 1879, « Passe-temps d'un Roi Assyrien » ; 1879 (autre voyage en Algérie), « Tentes des Nomades à Biskra » ; « Route de Biskra » ; « Sieste » ; « Village nègre » ; « Marchand de Babouches » ; « Bédouin à la Fontaine » ; « Deux vues de Tunis » ; 1882, « Plantation de Colza » ; « Femme Roumaine » ; 1883, « La Cigale » ; 1884, « Le Bain Turc ».

EDWARD STRAHAN.





## JULES LEFEBVRE



In literature as in the plastic-arts, a man survives only by his feminine creations. Any man, in the artistic world, who has given form to a woman, be it Mignon or the Esmeralda, Eugénie Grandet or Madame Bovary may feel assured that he will live. If the Monna Lisa was the only surviving example of the immense work of Leonardo da Vinci, he would nevertheless be immortal. And in truth why is it that this Leonardo, in the estimation of many, occupies the highest place among painters? Why should he be placed before Raphael the poet of the Madonna and Michael Angelo the evoker of sibyls? It is because he painted, celebrated and sung as I have said woman, a type of woman that will never be forgotten, an ideal woman glimpses of whom, to this day,

may be had, under lombardy veils, in the streets of Milan, but these are



less living than the immortal whose troubling eyes follow us from the depths of that wonderful picture in the Louvre. The painter of the *Joconde* is the painter of woman : therefore, like love and woman, eternal.

Jules Lefebvre has this originality, amongst many others, to be one of the painters of woman, one of the poets of modern woman, modern in the portrait as well as modern in evoking the seductions of the nude, Victor Hugo has said :

Chair de la femme, argile idéale, ô merveille.

This clay, that the painters of extreme modernism attempt to hide under dressmaker's furbelows, every contemporary master understands in his own manner. This one sees it pleasant, harmonious, with a charming delicacy in the drawing, slightly perverse a real *Parisienne* if I may say so ; another renders it with the splendors of graceful suppleness, strong almost stout ; another suppresses even the appearance of a body and represents in an idyllic landscape, a pale, fascinating apparition ; yet another gives it the rose tones, the youthful freshness of blooming cheek, ear and brow of a young girl ; Jules Lefebvre preserves of the *argile idéale*, or ideal clay a truthfulness at once alluring and chaste.



The purity of drawing and the grace of the posture seem to take from this



nudity the audacity which the slightest brutality would render vulgar. It is nature with all her charm, but with a style, taste and poetic feeling that elevates it, and renders its reality immaterial. And this it is that is so marvellous: the model is effaced and the goddess appears in triumphant nudity. It is *woman*, it is no longer *a woman*. The painter's brush is equal to the poet's irresistible seduction. The nude is no more troubling and is as exquisite in a picture by Jules Lefebvre as is Milton's song that is dedicated to the luminous splendors of Eve.

The delicacy, suppleness, and masterliness which are the dominant qualities of Lefebvre's brush add a new grace to woman's grace. I have seen by the author of *Diane surprise*, studies made at Haarlem after Franz Hals, whose works many of the ablest men of the present day have secretly studied and imitated without acknowledgment, no other painter has rendered with greater vigor, more manly valor, or a superior boldness of touch the brush marks of the dutch Velasquez. Master of his palette, Jules Lefebvre could spread roughly his canvases, like certain painters who willingly proclaim that artistic power is in the biceps; but he prefers the elegant charm, knowing the hardest thing to grasp in this difficult department of art, is the choice, the taste, the thought, and in the drawing what Ingres used to term the painter's probity, discretion in tones of the coloring and poetic sentiment. All the world can play the juggler with tubes of color and spread them on the palette. Only the real colorists know that all color is in light.

Such was the impression I lately received on entering Jules Lefebvre's atelier in the rue de la Bruyère, where standing on easels were exquisite



pictures some finished other yet to be developed. The female figures seen, in a rapid glance, in this big hall where the master works with youthful ardor show a matchless grace and delicate seduction; the painter often seeks inspiration from dreamers who also have celebrated woman, and they live again in all their charm in his canvases these creatures of romance and of poetry: as Virginie dreaming on board the vessel, Mignon lamenting the



country of bright nights, Corinne with tired arms hanging down her silent lyre slipping away. Hidden away in a corner, but accidentally discovered, was a fine figure of a blonde with extended hand into which the apple of temptation falls, an Eve, the Eve as dreamed of by lovers of form and that Lefebvre has evoked with all the seduction of that *Madeleine* of Luini that has so often attracted and held us captive at Milan.

Jules Lefebvre still keeps one of his first pictures, the *Veille de Noël* (Christmas eve), which was exhibited at the Salon 1861 and shows Joseph, followed by Mary, overcome with fatigue knocking in vain at the hostelry doors in Beth-

lehem. The canvas, of a fine warm coloring, dates from 1861 and, in the chaste figure of Mary, the supple talent, the art of the poet of femininity that Jules Lefebvre possesses already appears! It is however a work of his youth, painted the same year that the young master carried off —, after what efforts, — the prize of Rome. Nothing could be nobler or more valiant than the proud struggles of his debut. It was by courage that he like many others bought success. I imagine some intimate friend of Jules Lefebvre

must have given many biographical details to M. F. Jackyer who has published a study of the painter of the *Vérité* which has appeared in Baschet's *Galerie contemporaine* and I have more than once made use of indications found there in these pages.

Jules Lefebvre was born at Tournan, Seine-et-Marne; but it was at Amiens that he was reared. His father had opened there a baker's shop and the child before he handled a brush worked bravely with his elder brother, as he has been obliged to do all his life. He was sixteen years old when he left, having in his pocket a letter from Mgr. Salinis bishop of Amiens, the friend of Gerbet and the disciple of Lacordaire, for Paulin Guérin, professor of drawing at the school of Juilly. At sixteen Jules Lefebvre was determined to fight with all his strength to become a painter. But one does not become, one must be born a painter. Work can give the science, but only nature can bestow the *gift* without which all artistic erudition is as nothing. This *gift* Jules Lefebvre had, and he brought it with him to the atelier of Léon Cogniet, where he entered by means of a recommendation from Paulin Guérin.



Those ateliers of *père* Cogniet! How many celebrated painters have issued thence! They still meet together once a year at a banquet at which the old master formerly presided, and the comradeship of the atelier survives their triumphs and disappointments. Jules Lefebvre entered Léon Cogniet the same day that Charles Sellier took his place there, he who has left more than one picture worthy to be hung in the Louvre. The young painter was



far from rich; he lodged at n° 30, rue de l'Université, in a student's chamber for which at the end of each month, the brave father, the baker of Amiens paid. But, one fine day, to his delight : The Conseil municipal of Amiens, at the request of the professor of drawing of the town, the père Fusiller, who had been Lefebvre's first master, granted the young man an allowance of a thousand francs a year ! Less than a hundred francs a month but enough to furnish the necessities of life : shelter and daily bread, *la Niche et la Pâtée*, as Balzac used to say in his ambitious days. From 1854 to 1859, this pension

was assured to Jules Lefebvre and permitted him to work assiduously.

He entered the school of Fine-arts and at the end of eighteen months obtained a medal, at each quarterly examination he was one of those who obtained the greatest number of recompenses. " He had already, the master landscapist Guillaumet lately said to us, he who was his comrade then and has always remained his friend, he had that purity of execution that he has always kept, and that with him was combined with great facility. Lefebvre painted in a finished manner and he painted rapidly. He has continued to do so. "



In 1858, Jules Lefebvre for the first time tried for the prix de Rome. He obtained a mention. The prize-man, that year, was a young alsacian who had recently come into the atelier of Pieot whose name was Jean-Jacques Henner. He also, in his *Adam et Eve relevant le corps d'Abel* had, at the first attempt showed admirable qualities as a colorist. He was already *Henner*, as Jules Lefebvre was *Lefebvre*. The following year, ill, seized with an angina he had himself carried to the school on a mattress to execute his figure, Jules Lefebvre once more missed the prize; he tried again in 1860, but it was only in 1861, that he carried off the *Grand prix de Rome*. During the last six years, Lefebvre had exhibited at the Salon : in 1855 he had sent the portrait of M. Fusiller, his master; in 1857, a portrait of a lady; in 1859, three

portraits of men. At Rome, Lefebvre executed among others works his picture which hangs in the Luxembourg gallery, *Nymphe et Bacchus*, the excellent picture of the *Pèlerinage au Sacro Specas*, convent of San Benetto, near Subiaco (Etats Romains), procured him a medal at the Salon of 1865. The *Pèlerinage* of which Lefebvre has kept a very remarkable study, warm in tone, belongs to the princess Mathilde. The preceding year, the artist exhibited a *Charité romaine*, and old man, a prisoner, nourished by his daughter's milk, it is at present in the musée of Melun. The great force of will always shown by Lefebvre is to be found in this single fact, having obtained from the minister of the emperor's household and of fine arts one of the copies of the portrait of Napoléon III by Flandrin, that they were then bestowing on the provincial cities, the young artist asked, as a favor, to substitute in place of this work of copyist an original picture and to give, for the same price, a canvas that would be laborious to compose, create and execute, while it would be so easy to despatch the copy in a few days.



At the Salon of 1866, Lefebvre obtained a first great success with a *Jeune homme peignant un masque* (we believe it is now in the Museum at Auxerre?) a figure of perfect antique grace as delicate and fine as an ancient statuette. The following year his *Pie IX, à Saint-Pierre de Rome*, was highly appreciated by his fellow artists, but it was in 1868 that he produced his master stroke with his admirable portrait of *M<sup>lle</sup> L. L. . .* (*M<sup>lle</sup> Lefebvre*, his sister) and the *Femme couchée*, a study that is one of the chefs-d'œuvre of Alexander Dumas fils collection.

The public has not forgotten, this *Femme couchée*, one of the principal pictures of modern art, at once delicious and provoking, with the healthy carnation of the beautiful brunette in relief against a red background. It was again exhibited at the Universal Exhibition of 1878. It had not varied, there

was always the same brilliancy, the same seduction. Jules Lefebvre came near receiving the medal of honor that year, he has merited it more than once since and it seemed to be secured to him by his *Diane surprise*. It was in 1868 that Gustave Brion received, I forget for what picture, that médaille d'honneur, that some of the most illustrious have never obtained. There

were five votes taken : Corot each time had five voices, Jules Lefebvre five voices and G. Brion two voices. Then M. de Nieuwerkerke interposed, and the medal went neither to Corot nor Lefebvre, it was Brion who obtained it with seven voices.

Since the year 1868, J. Lefebvre has entered into the select group of artists who honor and make illustrious our time. Each of his Salons have been a brilliant success. In 1869 he exhibited *Pascaccia*, in 1870 the *Vérité* resplendent in majesty and clothed in its nudity if I may so express myself; in 1872, *la Cigale*, shivering, limid, sorrowful, delicious. So many victorious stations until we come to those exquisite works produced for refined connoisseurs but





which, however, soon became popular by their evident and imposing charm: *Chloé*, *la Madeleine*, *Pandore*, *Mignon*, *Diane*, *Graziella*, *la Fiammetta* of Boccace (in the musée imperial at Vienna), *Ondine*, *la Fiancée*, *Pysché*, *l'Aurore*. In all these figures there is a purity of lines and expression rarely found in the impressional painting of the moment, they show an elevated character and form a really superior feminine eden. What profound truth, what sentiment not only in the face but of the mind the glance and the thought in these portraits of Jules Lefebvre; in that of M<sup>lle</sup> L... his sister there is a profound intensity of life, in her pale blonde hair, and the arms showing through her black dress; Madame A. Dumas, elegantly enveloped in furs. And his portraits of men like old Pelfel, the centenarian, or M. Léonce Raynaud, so vigorously treated, and the portrait of a Lady in black Madame G. C..., that made a great sensation at the Salon of 1872, and whose pale, profound, ultra marine eyes seemed to penetrate the depth of the spectator's gaze.

And the portrait of Madame la princesse de Caraman-Chimay (Salon of 1875), that of Miss Vanderbilt which is perfectly charming (1882), and the lifelike, graceful and sweetly pensive portrait of a young girl in white which was the attraction of the Salon of 1884. And the portrait so admirable, so



intellectual in its elegant grace of Madame Paul Horteloup, in profile, seated with her hands crossed. The artist who is capable of thus rendering the scrutinizing gleams of two eyeballs, is not only a very skillful and admirably gifted painter, but a deep and discerning observer of human nature. And one cannot be a master in portraiture and a great painter like M. Lefebvre without this rare gift of analysis.

The french public has not been able to admire all of the works of the author of the *Fiancée*. Jules Lefebvre has executed for amateurs and often for himself important works that the critics would have gladly greeted with their bravos. The study for the portrait of the Prince Impérial will thus remain as a finished work. The ceiling ordered by M. Vanderbilt for his bed-room is

another of his important works that we regret has not

been exhibited here. We will soon be obliged to cross the Atlantic, to America, to see again our most famous pictures. The Americans have good taste. *Le Sommeil*,

Painted for Mr. Vanderbilt, is a bright composition, exquisite in coloring, with dreams of floating grace, vision of sleeping beauties in clouds, a masterly composition of refined poesy. Lefebvre has besides other choice pictures in America: Miss

Wolfe has *la Esmeralda*; Madame Odgen-Goelet has *Virginie*; M. Catelin (of St-Louis) has *la Cigale* and two very agreeable figures, *le Matin* and *le Soir*; Mr. Astor's *Cigale* in costume has all the charm of poetic truth.

Poetic truth! There is in these two words the entire science of esthetics.



Jules Lefebvre belongs to those who according to the clever saying of Jules

Dupré, takes nature as a pretext and art for his goal. I have seen in his atelier a commonplace looking model from whom he would draw an ideal figure, as gold is extracted from gangue. The true artist is thus constituted : he does not copy, he chooses. He leaves the literal truth to the object-glass of the photograph, he aims higher.

I am not sure if in an artistic study it is necessary to enumerate all the official recompenses that so often arrive at the wrong address. That which makes an artist's renown is not the crosses that he wears, but the pictures, books or statues that he signs. However it is well to say that more than once

justice has been rendered to the great merits of the rare artist that occupies us here. *Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur* since 1870, he was promoted to the grade of *officier* in 1878, the same year that he obtained a first-class medal at the Universal Exhibition. The author of *la Cigale*, of *Psyché* and of *Diane surprise*, is among those who await a higher recompense. Jules Lefebvre no more than Henner or Puvis de Chavannes will have long to wait before entering the *Institut* and taking their seat beside their comrade of the atelier Cogniet, Léon Bonnat and

of Paul Baudry, his predecessor. This master charmer who has held so high educated art, who has revived tradition, given contemporary life to





the academical, who is of his time living, militant, while respecting science and the masters, is at the same time an artist who respects his ideal, a sure friend, devoted to the rising painters and obliging to beginners, and in future years Jules Lefebvre will probably preside at the banquet of his pupils as his master Cogniet did before him, for Lefebvre has many pupils and with several of his confreres presides over one of the most flourishing independant art schools of Paris. Independant only in not being under the control of the government art administration, but not to be confounded with the so called "Independants" for at this art school the instruction is conservative, keeping to old traditions and artistic rules still understanding strength to be good drawing, careful modeling and coloring. From this school pupils are often sent to compete with those of the government schools for purses or for the highest of all the prizes : the prize of Rome. To his pupils Jules Lefebvre is exceedingly kind opening his private studio to them every sunday morning



and giving his time and experience to help the pupils in their work, and just before the Salon this is a most generous and extensive gift, as many of those who wish for advice paint large canvases that cannot be brought to the master, so the master is obliged to visit the pupil in his studio and if the work is found to be worthy of the ambitious size, he repeats his visit and naturally, he helps the aspiring artist along in his work. His pupils are very fond of their master and have unbounded faith in judgment. Should he in

some future time receive the appointment of professor to the government school as it has already been talked of as probable, it will be very difficult for Mr. Lefebvre as his outside school will I am sure not readily resign their master. Why Jules Lefebvre has not yet obtained at the Paris Salon the



medal of honor would be difficult to explain, and with the explanation it would be obligatory to recount the workings of the Jury of recompenses, and how the loss of a few votes was on account of the voters personal interests; as they did not vote recompenses to the art of the individual but to certain individuals who exhibited works of art. Several years ago the medal of honor was voted for at the annual exhibition and as this medal was voted for by exhibitors those who were present at the voting were eligible for the recompense. Round went the urn, the first time no one name had enough votes to procure a decision, after some lobbying

and a great deal of talking the urns were passed again, when the ballots were counted it was discovered that one of the members present had been elected, that all present had voted, and that the vote was unanimous. Naturally there was a murmur of astonished amusement amongst the assembly. But the successful candidate could not understand the sensation his success had produced. I would gladly speak of Lefebvre in his home, worthy and honorable, if respect had not willed that the private life of an artist, even the most cherished, should remain veiled.

Let us remain with the artist. A critic who sometimes expresses singular ideas, but is of an original, curious and investigating mind, M. J. Peladan, has lately written in *l'Artiste*, in reference to Jules Lefebvre : " He is the Sully-Prudhomme of painting". The truth is that the paintings of Jules Lefebvre makes one dream of those exquisite visions of the poet and that their penetrating grace is like a musical charm : *Ut pictura poesis*. His painting is like poetry. But



in carefully studying the finished drawings of this young master, those feminine forms of infinite suppleness, the naereous tinted flesh of delicious purity like animated marble statues, in contemplating the visions that the artist pursues into the clouds as in *le Rêve*; on the banks of a brook in a delicious, silvery morning haze, like *l'Aurore*, in the half light of an invisible world, like the adorable *Psyché* that he has shown us as pensive, chaste and troubled; and as the divine *Mignon*, it is the name of a painter, it is not the name of a poet that rises to the lips; the name of an artist who calls forth in a masterly manner the poetic graces and antique seductions. And I am ready to affirm that Lefebvre enamoured of the *Charme des choses* is like a Prudhon modernized.

Yes Prudhon's nymphs smiling at the visions of femininity that would have carried them off in their round, in the dancing chorus of goddesses, call up dreams of reveries, chimeras, and the eternal seductions of divine antiquity.

JULES CLARETIE.







## DE NITTIS



When for the first time Joseph de Nittis sent a picture to the Paris Salon, he was asked his master's name that, as is the custom, it might be inscribed in the catalogue, he was greatly embarrassed: for he was the pupil of no one.

This artist so modern and Parisian in his painting was born near ancient Apulia on the shores of the Adriatic, in oriental Italy where are still to be seen among hellenic and roman ruins, the red battlements of saracen citadels and high square towers of norman fortresses. His native place the lovely town of Barletta is a few leagues from the battle field of Cannes, *Campo di sangue*. His family of spanish origin settled in the Sicilies in the eighteenth century. The name of Vélasquez was borne by them.

He lost whilst very young his father and mother. At twelve years of age he came to Naples and at sixteen he drew his first sketches, naive landscapes directly inspired by nature. Desiring to do better his brother bought for him seven colors, « the seven colors of the rainbow, these were to be sufficient to paint everything. » He then spent a few days with the professor Dattoli, afterward he spent a few weeks at the Naples school of fine arts, where the routine soon discouraged him, he quickly returned to nature which he understood infinitely better without an interpreter.

He had that nervous, thoughtless intuitive organization, which instinct



guides with strange clairvoyance but that at the beginning all rules worry and reasoning troubles, and the imposing of authority galls, warps and paralyzes. When thus endowed only what is acquired by one's self, the germs of which are virtually innate, fertile germs that gradually develop little by little unless checked by some outside influence, that awakes and expands in the contemplation of nature as a magic light slowly rises in an immense

mirror. Thus placed before such evidences, that demonstrations only obscure, from axiom to axiom one is led by spontaneous impulses until the links that chain the principles together are discovered as the child Pascal reinvented geometry. Only it is in the opposite sense to the scholars that the artist evolves, proceeding by induction and not by deduction he proceeds from the repeated observations to unity of rules, from complexity to the simplicity of the bearings of the law, from the circumference to the center, from life to the soul. What distressing groping about before he had assimilated the technical part of his art and complete knowledge of his handicraft. But he thus created an originality without alloy. Then having attained, by the free and unconscious evolution of his temperament, the complete knowledge of his powers and his goal he seized the meaning and bearing of

classical instruction and perhaps profited more than others by the experience of former ages thus brightening and strengthening his work.



After two years of wandering about and studies made in the fields the undisciplined pupil brought back from his truancy some canvases that attracted attention by their singular sincerity. At first he was supposed to be a french landscapist. He was discussed and encouraged. At the Naples museum he became fascinated by the expressive simplicity of the primitive masters. He delights to proclaim that from nature in the vicinity of Naples and the early masters in the museum there he obtained all his knowledge.

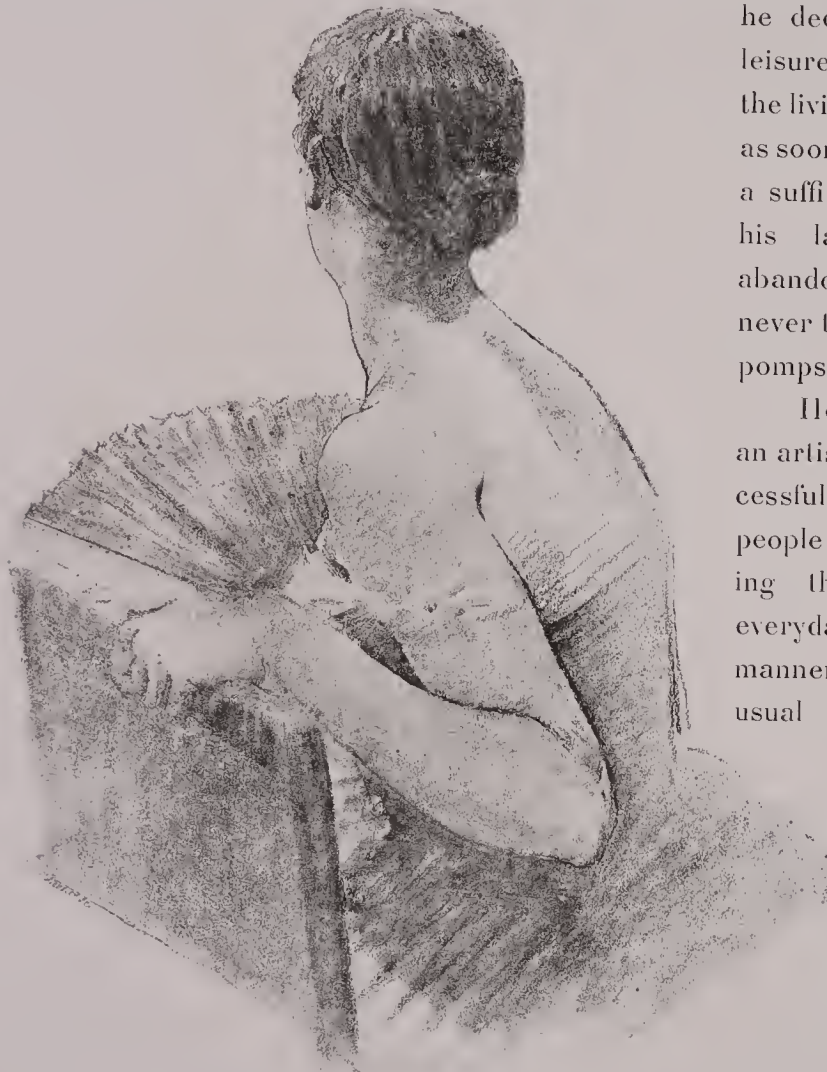
He sent to the exhibitions in Rome and Florence new compositions that were remarked; then as soon as he had the necessary means for the trip he crossed Italy and France without stopping and arrived one fine morning in June 1867, in Paris, not knowing a word of french, without letters of introduction and with only money enough to last him a few days. Paris! the fairy city, the great heroine of the modern epopee, the ardent and charming initiator of lofty thoughts and noble actions; it was the fulfilment of dreams and hopes, the struggle in the furnace, and the apotheosis. He went from Rome to Paris as our prize-pupils go from Paris to Rome. He came here to interrogate the future as they go to Rome to question the past. With what enthusiasm he greeted the gilded eupola of the Panthéon and the towers of Notre-Dame! But when he realized that he was alone a stranger unknown, lost in the hurrying to and fro of the busy, indifferent crowd, the reaction was glacial. Recalling his courage he took possession of the town with an indomitable curiosity, and when evening came he could admire without sadness the historical grandeurs of the monumental quays.



The first days were terribly difficult, but he had a strong will and hope.



A sculptor, his compatriot, made him acquainted with Brandon the painter of synagogues who presented him to M. Gerome and through M. Gerome he became acquainted with M. Meissonier. He worked on steadily, if to assure his independence he produced retrospective fancies and gallant festivals, if for a time he took advantage of the taste for history interpreted as carnival,



he dedicated all his leisure to the study of the living reality, and as soon as he obtained a sufficient price for his landscapes he abandoned travesty never to return to its pomps and conceits.

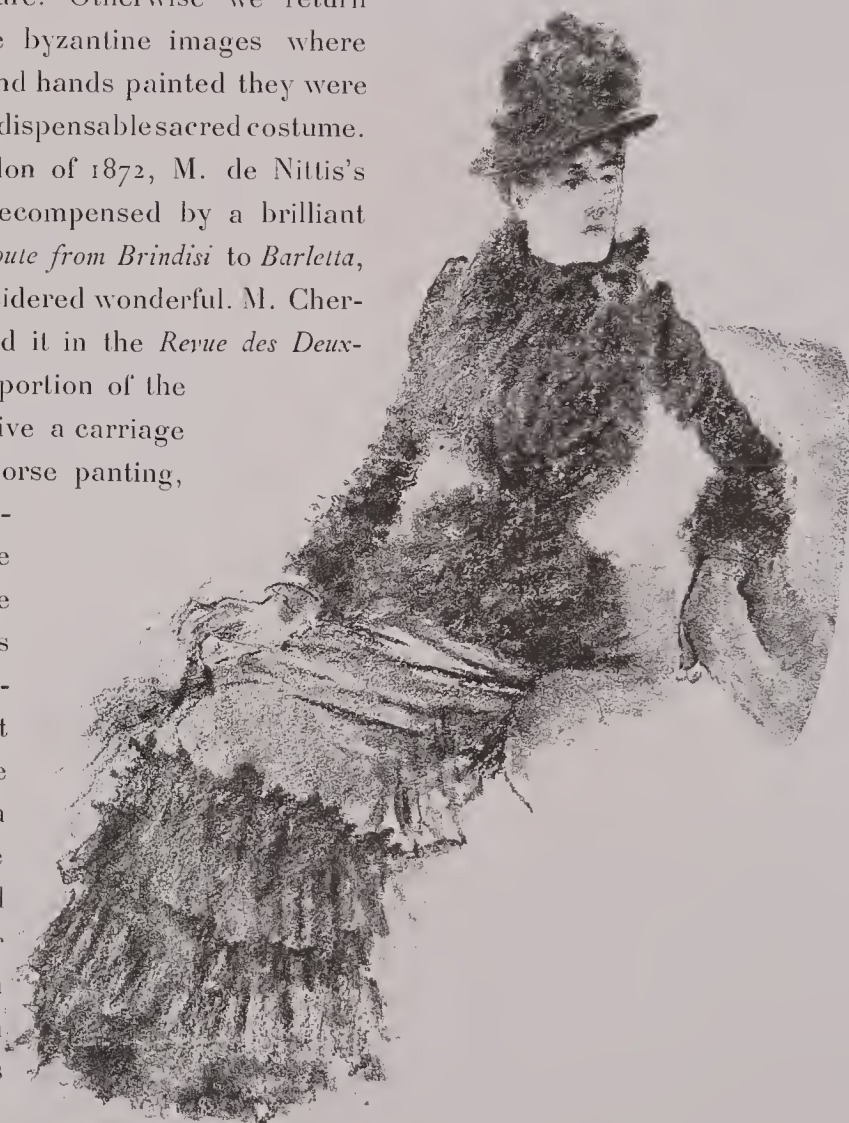
He believes that an artist can only successfully characterize people by representing them in their everyday costume and manners with their usual surroundings, in the attitude of their habitual labor and with the bent of their dominant thoughts. Far from this they

formerly successively dressed the new life in the cast-off garments of past ages. They went from Athenes to Rome, from the Escorial to Versailles. But modern man does not resemble either in body or mind the man of antiquity, and what sort of a modern man do they paint? a poor model, who is in turn Achilles and Tircis, Brutus and Lauzun, Saint-Just and Barras. Everything is out of tune in such mimicry, it is a perpetual anachronism, that only

great genius could overcome. When they commenced painting modern costumes such was the power of routine that they copied them all from ordinary models. It required almost a revolution to force them to reproduce people as they carried themselves, with the dress and the manner that is a second nature. Otherwise we return straight to the byzantine images where with the face and hands painted they were framed in the indispensable sacred costume.

At the Salon of 1872, M. de Nittis's efforts were recompensed by a brilliant success, his *Route from Brindisi to Barletta*, was justly considered wonderful. M. Cherbuliez eulogised it in the *Revue des Deux-Mondes* : On a portion of the road we perceive a carriage stopped the horse panting, and two travellers walking, the carriage, horse and the walkers are a chef-d'œuvre, what I most admire is the road itself a large white chalk-colored road, whoever has travelled in Italy has seen and perhaps condemned it :

but it is adorable in painting. It would be impossible to be dustier, I am sure that that route knows from whence it comes and where it is going, it enjoys and is rendered happy by its journey it warms itself in the sunshine with the beatitude of a lizard, they make friends together and confide their secrets one to the other. And what I also admire is the marvellous



transparence of the air, the softness of the sky, the lightness of the little clouds that are like flakes of down and yet have a form and body, the fugitive line of the horizon that we guess at rather than see, and the perspective and distance in this little canvas, where the gaze wanders and is lost in the immensity. Certain artists are sorcerers; they have magieal processes to tame infinite space and reduce it to the dimensions of a frame the size of one's hand.

From 1872 to 1878 each year the painter exhibited with equal good fortune. His landscapes of Paris and its environs are remembered by all: the *Seine at Bougival*, the *Place de la Concorde*, *Hiver au Bois*, the *Place des Pyramides*,

*Pont Royal*, and others. He spent some time in London, the iridescent London fogs were not less inspiring than italian sunshine or the skies of France. At the international Exhibition of 1878 he sent fourteen compositions representing his work under this triple aspect. He brought together again new works in 1879 in the rooms of the *Vie moderne*, and in 1880 in the galleries of *l'Art*. In 1881 he had an exhibition of pastels at the Union artistique club which remains celebrated. And in 1882 and 1883 we find him in the rue de Sèze, at the little international

Salon of which he was the principal organizer. In 1884 he re-entered the Palais des Champs-Élysées with three remarkable compositions.

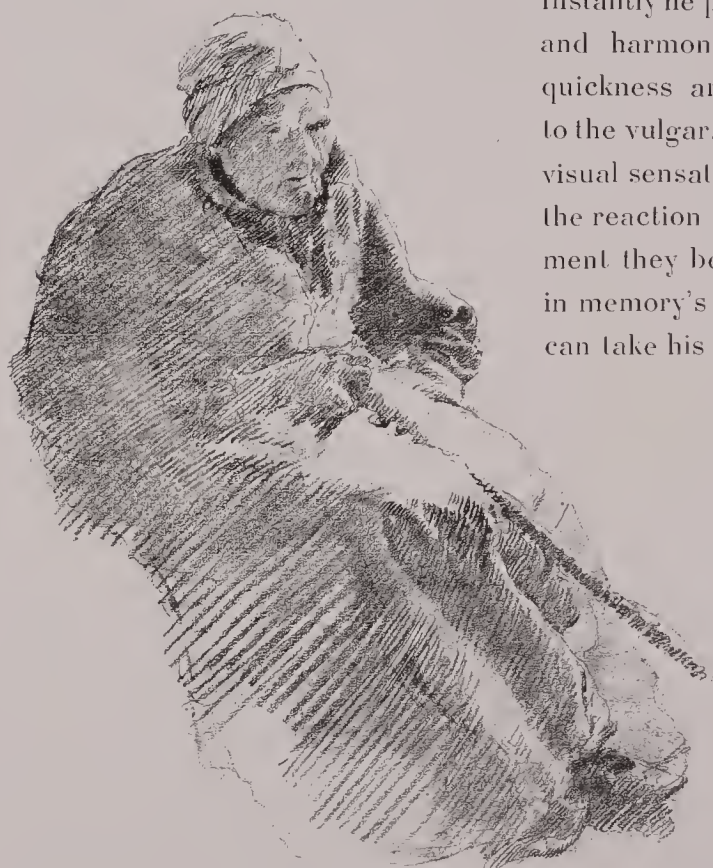
M. de Nittis has a very significant manner of working. If all he produces is the outcome of living reality do not be lead to believe that he paints everything on the spot, that he binds himself down to a mechanical exactitude, a passive imitation, a neutral copy. Before the sight that tempts and touches him he generally only outlines a summary indication, this slight sketch will be sufficient to recall clearly later the vanished vision. How else could he proceed? Is it possible to make free and undulating nature pose? De Nittis avoids as much as possible making the people he paints pose, the pose always appears prepared and unreal, he desires the unguarded movement the intimate personality the mind itself of persons and things. It





is in the sudden radiance of a smile, in the flash of a glance, in moving caress of an instinctive gesture or a forgotten attitude that he surprises the life, beauty, the grace which is the beauty of movement, and the expression which is the beauty of the mind and heart.

To seize and render all this an extremely delicate and powerful organ is necessary, also a very supple and comprehensive intelligence. This sense and imagination of a painter de Nittis possesses in a remarkable degree.



Instantly he perceives the relations and harmonies of nature with a quickness and sureness unknown to the vulgar. And as soon as these visual sensations are perceived, by the reaction of the will and judgment they become fixed, indelible in memory's cells. Then the painter can take his time : he is not forced

to work hurriedly from appearances that slip from the sight as water escapes through the fingers; he has only to look within himself and his picture will be the living reflection of this « second view ».

Impressionist in conception de Nittis

is a harmonist in execution, the unity of the work comes from the unity of the idea. Each of his compositions are a closely linked, complete organisation, a kind of aerial architecture from which, nothing could be taken away without shaking and compromising the entire edifice. They are as simple as the day and as complex as life. The sun awakens and accentuates the tones, warming and impregnating them with purple and gold, whilst the shadow calming the brilliancy, softens the contrasts, absorbs the reflections thus forming by its darker tones the

bass of the symphony and vaguely lulling the dark blues and twilight violets of the outlines.

And it is as true as it is charming : the effect corresponds exactly to the mathematical relations of luminous vibrations, to the law of opalescent centers dividing the light into warm tints which they transmit and cold tints that are reflected, the law of complimentary colors mutually magnified by their opposition ; and the law of collateral colors where the strongest decompose and partially absorb the feebler.

Such an art as this is full of perils. What exactness of sight and delicacy of touch are necessary, but where





Photographie & Imp.





the science of de Nittis might hesitate, his taste guides him surely, his style is always simple and large. In the interior image, from which he works, valueless details are forgotten the characteristic lines and dominant notes alone exist, so he reproduces but these with exactitude and decided intensity. When a tone is produced in nature by the juxtaposition and not by the mingling together of the colors that compose it, he does



not render them by mixing the colors on his palette but by placing them in juxtaposition on the canvas. For bringing colors together renders them much more luminous than their amalgamation : associated without being confounded, it allows the eye to reestablish the precise shade, not of the coloring materials but by the colored light. With de Nittis works the sight is never wearied or offended, even in his most daring colorations the sharpness is deadened by the diffusion of air that all seem to breathe, the sky which gives to each detail its relative accent and value. When they talk to him of « modernity » he readily responds that as the preraphaelites had left nothing to be desired

either in form, color or expression the moderns could only invent the sentiment of atmosphere. It is certain that since the fifteenth century art has known the charm of bluish shadows and tempered horizons; but it is only lately that they have really understood and expressed how much there is of air and sky that is always mingled with terrestrial sights.

Before the recent evolution provoked by our landscapists, the stiff trees with their foliage chiseled as in a bas-relief seemed to be fixed upon the canvas and were of no more account than an architectural decoration.

The sky had no value except as a curtain in the background. The younger painters have given french art a high position, and de Nittis has succeeded in making circulate through his work the vibration of life, filling with rays of light the grasses and leaves and showing the soul that is spread over the universe. And a rare thing in this hardened age he has kept the



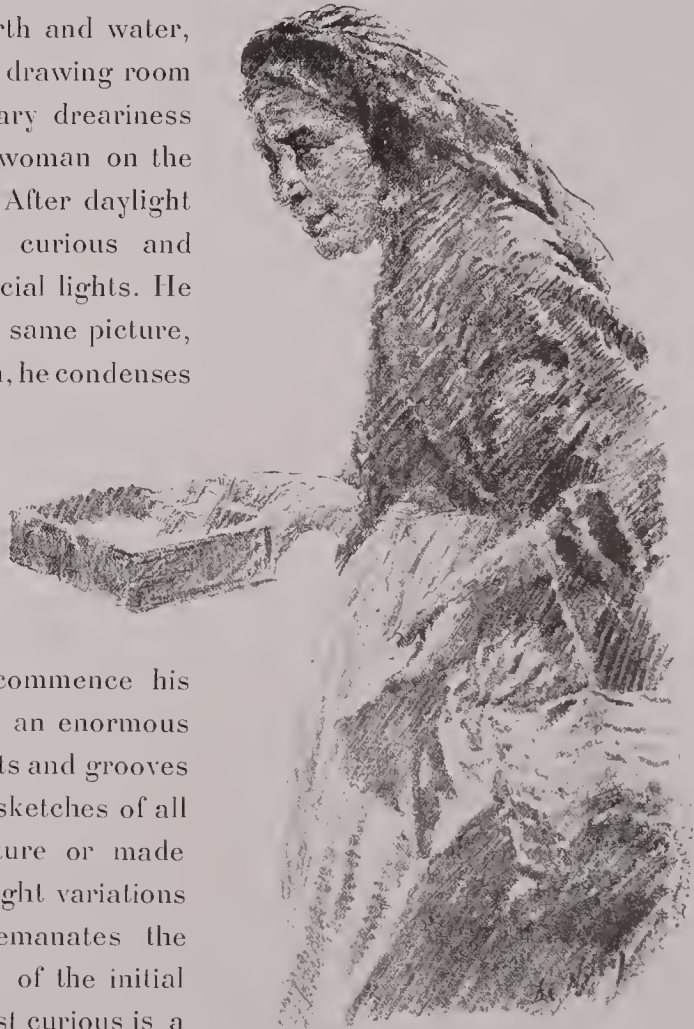
freshness of his early emotions all the ardor of his youthful enthusiasm. He seems to be born again at each sunrise, and to be always tasting the joys of a new life before the different sights that the perpetual transformation of forces and substances offers. He understands the secret affinities that unites forms and minds, he remembers the counsels of Leonardo di Vinci. « It is not being a strong man among painters to succeed in only one thing, the nude, the head, draperies, animals, landscapes or other department, there

is no mind so gross that, in time, with continued and earnest application to one thing, it cannot succeed in accomplishing it satisfactorily. A painter should be universal, study everything that he comes in contact with, render account of all that he sees, let nothing remarkable pass without keeping a sketch or reminder of it, and only cling to what is in all ways excellent. »

To perfect and keep himself fresh de Nittis spares neither time nor



trouble, vivacious, alert of medium height and well built the features finely cut, with an intense and slightly concentrated glance, the face remarkably mobile, brown hair and beard with golden reflections he is always in movement, always in quest of new fields and unknown sources. Indefatigable with youthful ardor he paints streets and woods, verdant landscapes and landscapes of stone, wheatfields and race courses, earth and water, the delicious parisian drawing room toilettes and the solitary dreariness of a poor old ragged woman on the banks of the Thames. After daylight effects he seeks the curious and charming play of artificial lights. He never paints twice the same picture, he gives all his strength, he condenses all the charm of the received impression in the work that should express it. Severe for himself he seeks until he finds and if necessary he will recommence his work twenty times. In an enormous box, with compartments and grooves he keeps numberless sketches of all sorts, taken from nature or made from memory from slight variations of which gradually emanates the pure and definite form of the initial theme. One of the most curious is a study of sky, done in less than an hour in answer to a challenge of Messrs. Gerome and Boulanger : in the infinite azure floats, like white fleece, some wandering vapor; there is nothing else and the effect is prodigious. It is Shelley's cloud transposed, the painter has modeled the impalpable.



As he varies his subjects so he varies his processes, he became fasci-

nated with the limpidity and flowering freshness of water-colors; and already he has abandoned them to devote himself to eau-forte that attracts and absorbs him. It was quite late when he specially devoted himself to drawing. Is not drawing an abstraction? Does not the light cause to vibrate like sonorous cords all the outlines that it touches? Does it not



enter more or less into every substance? What are the colors of even the hardest metals but the different decompositions of white rays on the various surfaces that they strike?

But the really great passion of de Nittis is the pastel. If he loses the intense transparency of oil colors he gains a wonderful rapidity of execution, outlines drawn and colored at a stroke, tones deliciously modeled, and shadows of a strange softness, he gains that vaporous envelopment that give so marvellously the golden dust of a sun's ray the velvet of a ripe fruit, the down of flowering carnations, the haze of the horizon's ambient air, diffused light atmosphere and per-

spective. His chef-d'œuvre in this style is the portrait of a woman exhibited in 1882. Has an agreement ever been effected with greater simplicity, strength and grace between the melody of lines, the eurythmy of movements and the harmony of tones? with what slender elegance, and powerful relief, what intimate and penetrating charm that pensive female figure bathed in mysterious penumbra by the reflection of friendly tones stands

out in the counter-light against the dead whiteness of the snowy landscape! The painter seems to have returned to Rembrandt's processes. Rembrandt made a ray of light sing amidst dark profoundness; de Nittis places in the center of a white harmony a spot of shadow, where it floats as if surrounded by a halo of glory, the dream of a human mind.

The pastel of the Salon of 1884 was not less interesting, on a background of fresh verdure, warmed by reddish and golden tones and which is relieved by the light arabesque of a long and flexible white flowering branch, a graceful young woman, dressed in a olive colored dress advances, the coloration which is calm, full, tender and velvety, admirably commands the musical medley of the background, what a generous variety of shades in this large unit of intonation! There is a gradation of shades as complex and tender as those that give its natural charm to the rose. It was impossible for de Nittis to paint pictures of crowded thoroughfares and public places from the sidewalk where a gaping crowd would have quickly assembled and so he adopted the method of painting from a cab, and with one of the blinds drawn down to keep out a cross-light, the cab stationed, day after day, on a corner for hours used to attract the attention and curiosity of the passer-by, who thought the occupant on some love errand or a prussian spy. But the cab system was not roomy enough and so the painter bought a small family omnibus put a glass roof into it and curtained and arranged the interior into a small but charming studio. No one seeing this small, modest omnibus stationed on the corner of a street, would have given it a second glance or suspected that its occupant was busily engaged sketching from one of its windows the young woman quietly standing upon the curbstone, as if waiting for an omnibus, but who was in reality a model for de Nittis.



Decorated in France in 1878, de Nittis is at present naturalized a Parisian. In the full force of his talent, and in entire possession of his art each



day he asserts himself with more masterly sureness. No one is less exclusive than he but also no one sacrifices less to fashion the personality of his doctrine. He passed through impressionism without lingering or losing himself only keeping a flower of white light with a bit of thread fallen from Iris's scarf. He does not believe in the absolute in art but always remains receptive to the ideal. Is not the ideal the harmony that the artist is always trying to establish between himself and his surroundings, between his faculties and their object; between his internal vibration and the symphony of universal nature? This aspiration that none it is true can fully satisfy here; the beautiful that is only the manifestation of the harmonies that approach more or less to unrealizable perfection. But however defective they may be these harmonies afford us rest from the discords and falseness of life. We find in them hope and consolation and for this reason we should honor the harmonist painters.

This study was written some months ago, and who then would have thought that before it was printed the death of the painter would be recorded.

ÉMILE BLÉMONT.





## H.-W. MESDAG



Mesdag paints the sea as no one has painted it before him, under all its different aspects and at all hours, that North sea which is the most changeable of all, now calm, mirrorlike, of an ideal blue spangled with gold and silver, resembling a rare Japanese fabric; at other times gray, inert; some times furious, roaring, rolling its powerful waves against the fishing-boats that knock against each other and are covered with clouds of foam. Before Mesdag's pictures we seem to breathe the keen salt air, so accurately and with such intensity is the effect expressed. When he has received an impression he knows how to render it marvellously, without faltering, or losing any of its strength or freshness and this is not done superficially, but by carefully finished, concise and coherent work. How is this? Gifted with great talent and inexhaustible energy he has never

abandoned that intense struggle with nature which is the foundation of a painter's knowledge. Living near the sea, he sees it daily and paints hundreds of studies so that he knows by heart its slightest reflections its most delicate shades. Thus prepared, it is sufficient for him to make slight sketches in his walks on the beach and then on his return home he can reproduce what he has seen and what has impressed him as well if not better than he could if he were to work directly from nature.



His painting is essentially modern, he has an intense hatred of all that is not true in tone, color or drawing. He considers himself a realist and is in fact as much as Zola, in the true and elevated sense of the word. His work is true and gives an absolute impression of the reality, but how far his interpretation, his rendering are removed from the servile photographie copy that also

passes for realism and that has nothing in common with art. Mesdag is an earnest painter before nature, and knows how to communicate with all their delicacies the emotions that he experiences. In a word, he knows how to see and to express; and he could say, as I think Theophile Gautier said : « I am a man for whom the visible world exists. »



Mesdag has the exterior of his talent. Tall, strong, powerful, he also resembles his works, by the frankness and sincerity of his character.

Born in 1831 at Groningen he passed his youth in commercial pursuits, and it was only about 1866 that he decided to devote himself entirely to painting. He had always drawn more or less in his leisure moments and



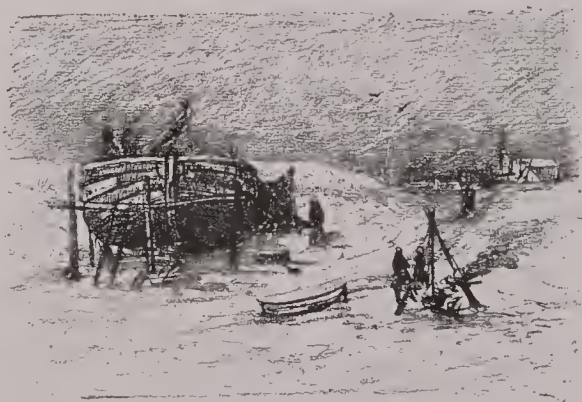
followed with interest all artistic questions. He then left Groningen to go and work in Brussels with Roelofs and with his relative Alma Tadema : the latter especially counselled a careful conscientious study of nature's smallest



corners. It was winter, and being unable to work out of doors, he made from his windows studies that have become legendary in the studios of Holland. Thus we have seen a pavement half covered with melted snow; walls to which were clinging with difficulty the rickerty branches with a few purplish leaves of woodbine; each stone, each leaf is studied in all its tones with patience and a

remarkable tenacity. There exists by Mesdag a heap of bricks, nothing else but so completely rendered in the most delicate shades of gray and rose that it like his other studies, forms a complete picture, almost a poem like those that the Japanese produce so successfully, by placing a russet leaf and an insect on a black lacquer background, that fully expresses : autumn.

At this time he made a study that still hangs in his studio : a seemingly endless stretch of barren land, ploughed fields, with little white houses in the distance, the whole illuminated by a pale wintry sun cold, hard but impressive in its truthfulness. We mention these studies to show what pa-



tience, sincerity and persevering energy he has shown from the beginning. It is through these great qualities which have never failed him, joined to his talent and fine, penetrating observation that so many intensely truthfull and lifelike works have been produced.

Mesdag spent the following summer at Nordemey, and there always in

presence of the Ocean, he comprehended the inexhaustable riches of its aspects ; and resolved to settle near his favorite element, so he came to the Hague to live, where he is only twenty minutes from the sea shore that offers an immense field for study differing not only from day to day but not being the same two hours together. The almost continuous movement of the hun-

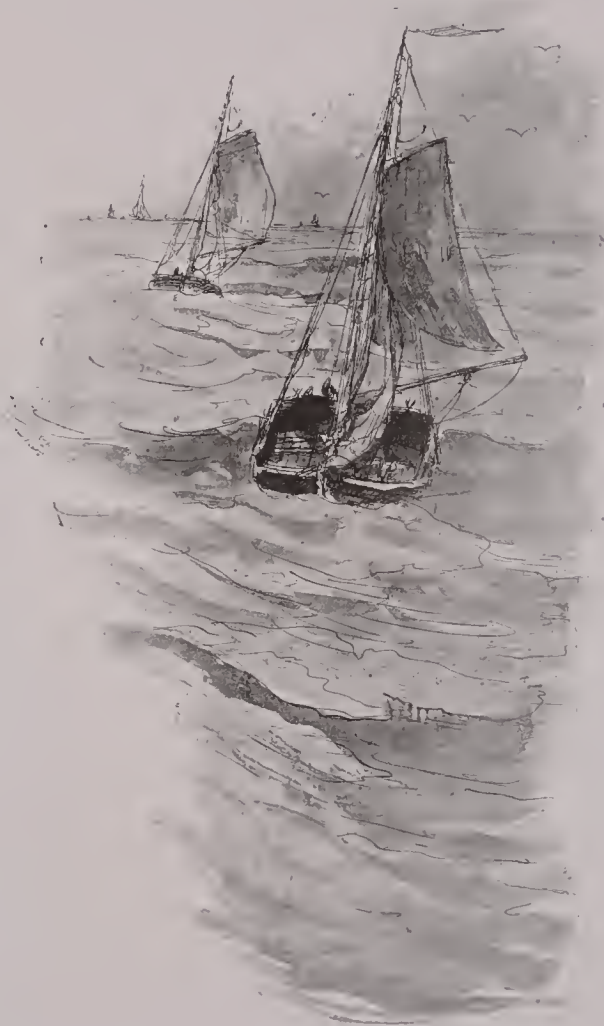


dreds of fishing boats that continually arrive and leave Scheveningen animate this shore in a most fascinating way. These greyish-black, flat boats, with bands painted white, green or blue, whose red and yellow sails are marvellous notes of color, of themselves make superb subjects for pictures, when they arrive with their sails furled rolling on the waves and groping their way over the banks that precede the shore.

In 1869 Mesdag exhibited at the Hague two pictures that violently excited the curiosity of the public. These works which were simple, original and so purely realistic disconcert-

ed those who were accustomed to juicy, insipid little pictures and the freshness and truth of the healthy color provoked astonishment rather than admiration. One of them was entitled. « What will become of them ? » On a rough sea was struggling a life-saving boat that was going to the rescue of a ship in danger seen on the horizon. The stupid scoffers of those who dare break away from established traditions, said of the painter « what will become of him » ? He has since proved. His viril talent has imposed itself in all its strength and rough flavor, and it was in Paris that

he was first appreciated. In 1870 he exhibited at the Salon « breakers of the North sea ». Nothing but the green, yellowish foaming sea under a low, heavy, grey sky. The simplicity of this effective picture without any affectation obtained for him a medal ; Millet who was a member of the jury sent his congratulations to Mesdag and the picture was purchased by Chaplin. From this real success his reputation dates. A couple of years later the jury of the exhibition at the Hague also conferred on him a gold medal for a fishing boat entering Scheveningen in a rough sea. This canvas like the preceding ones is full of movement, life and atmosphere; it does not seem to be a picture but a vista of real nature, and for this Mesdag has been blamed. The ruggedness of the scenes that he paints shocks the delicate sense of the public, and in Holland, they reproach him with being too realist, they think that in painting also it is not well to tell all the truth. They prefer



it chastened, softened rendered insipid, not understanding that the vigor and daring of his talent are in fact his supreme qualities and that without them he would no longer be himself. The ardor and vehemence, with which he brushes infuriated waves devouring the sands of the shore, dismays, perplexes and astounds them. Nevertheless he has proved that he knows how to express the finest, most exquisite and fleeting shades of glorious summer sunsets and silvery daybreaks reflecting in the clear



water the most delicate coloring: rose, turquoise and nacre. We remember to have seen some years ago a wonderful sunset, nothing but sea and sky; on the horizon a couple of little sails enveloped in the radiance; the sky

was dazzling: all the colors of the most refined palette from lapis lazuli blue to orange-green, from purple to gold, and their infinite grades of half-tones reflected in the ealm water. This picture was impressive in the power of its color and truthfulness.



Another was a twilight. The monotonous beach outlined by the sea fringed with foam above a enormous apoealyptic sky, banks of gray clouds towering in the livid sky, this canvas was also remarkable by the grandeur and poetry that it exhaled. And those agitated seas harassed by autumnal squalls where the clouds like frightened sea-mews almost touch the water and the tumultuous waves streaked by the wan rays of pale sunlight, what wonderful pages these are, impregnated with air, living and vivifying.

Mesdag is more and more attracted by the movements of the boats that he



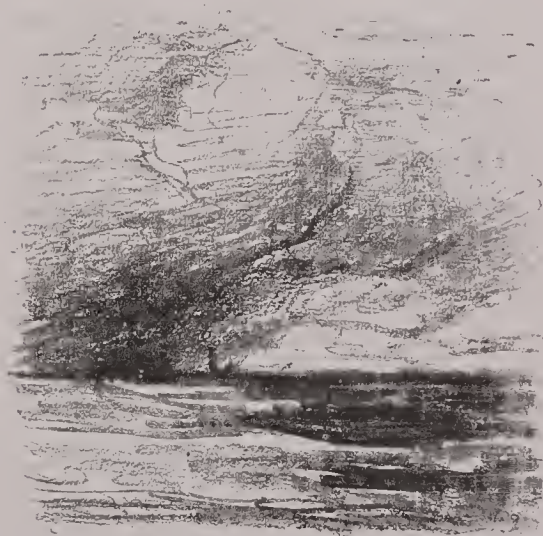
sees daily at Seheveningen. He groups together numerous fishermen on the beach and sometimes he put an idea in his pietures. Thus we have the going out and the return of the life-saving boat : on the horizon there is

a ship in distress; the boat that is going to its relief is anxiously watched by a picturesque crowd of fishermen and their wives. These black, russet, yellow notes with the white of the women's caps fill up remarkably the scene which in both pictures takes place under a superb sky where the big clouds pass rapidly over the delicate blue chased by the squall, showing between little blue holes of that sky that is only seen in Holland.



Living always so near to the shore and constantly

observing Mesdag is acquainted with the smallest details of maritime life, the rigging of the boats and their putting out to sea. So he has, as I have said above, often painted the arrival on the beach of the "pink" closely pursued, and the departure when held by their last anchor, the



red and yellow sails filled by the wind, they balance on the waves.

Among other effects of this kind, was remarked at the Salon of 1878 two boats just ready to leave tossed by the waves, in the background of the picture a narrow strip of sky. The frame cuts an enormous transparent, green wave, there is no beach nothing else and yet what immensity, life and depth in this canvas, one of the most original of the masters.

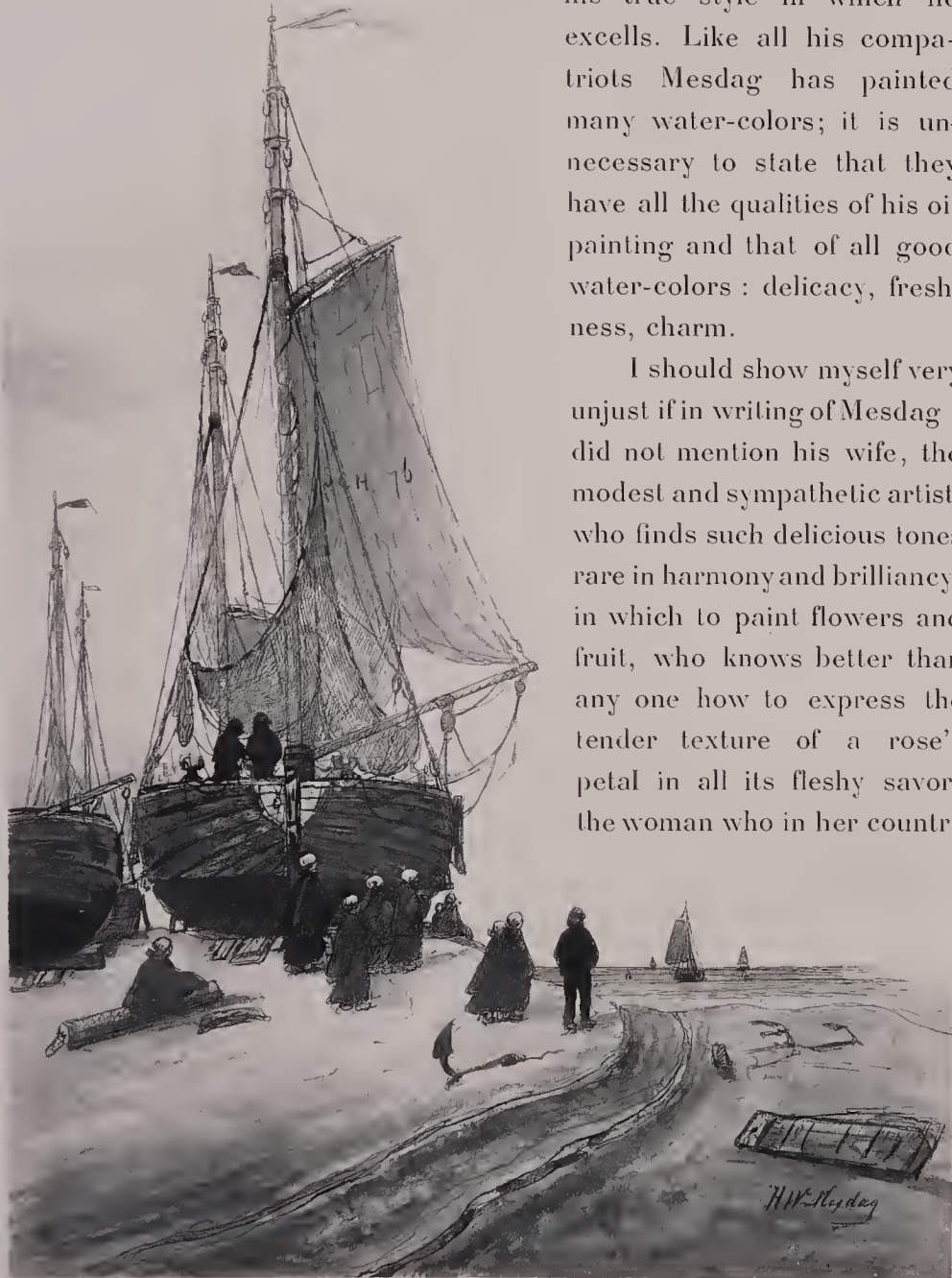
How little is necessary to pro-

duce a great work! Mesdag has not confined himself to paint only the sea. Melancholy landscapes among the heaths of Dreuthe, scenes in his native town of Groningen and most of all snow scenes. At the Salon of 1882 he had a beach scene at Schéveningen in winter; some boats without masts stowed away on the sands make a brown spot in the

immense white extent that stretches as far as the eye can see. These works had his usual qualities : correctness of color and tone, execution trusty, free and bold-spirited, and they are enveloped in air and light. But he is never however so original, and great as in his marine views these are

his true style in which he excells. Like all his compatriots Mesdag has painted many water-colors; it is unnecessary to state that they have all the qualities of his oil painting and that of all good water-colors : delicacy, freshness, charm.

I should show myself very unjust if in writing of Mesdag I did not mention his wife, the modest and sympathetic artist, who finds such delicious tones rare in harmony and brilliancy, in which to paint flowers and fruit, who knows better than any one how to express the tender texture of a rose's petal in all its fleshy savor; the woman who in her country









hold the first place as a painter of still life. The house that Mesdag occupies is very simple outside and nothing suggest that inside those rose colored brick walls, are gathered together innumerable treasures. The walls of all the chambers are covered with pictures, it is the choicest and most select collection of modern pictures that it has been our fortune to see.

Being an artist, Mesdag has known how to choose. The french school is represented by numerous pictures of its best and most noted masters. Corot, Troyon, Diaz, Dupré, Courbet, Millet, Daubigny and Rousseau are there in all their glory well represented by choice specimens of their works, and those great, but too little known artists Hippolyte Boulanger, Hervier, les Maris have admirable works and their talent is much better shown here placed beside these masters than it was at the Salons where they were crushed and annihilated by the gaudy showy canvases that surrounded them.

The studio itself is an accumulation of beautiful objects, the walls are covered with ancient tapestries; landscapes with figures in dull greens, sonorous, marvellously colored, all being in perfect harmony.

Here we find dark toned, black, old-time chests, gothic credences and others of the Renaissance period that are almost lost in the shadow except where the light catches on some portion of their carvings. In the corners immense japanese vases; on the armoires exquisite satsumas making with their gay mellow tones a most delightful symphony vying in their play of color with the velvety tones of the persian rugs as seen in the half light.

An immense window that overlooks the royal park, a forest, throws a





strong light on the always numerous works of the painter whose activity equals his energy and talent.

Before him no painter had ever fully expressed the grandeur and the power of the Ocean. Ruysdael, Van de Velde, had painted delicate, airy skies tenderly modeled and agreeable composition of boats, but



Mesdag is without doubt the first painter that has understood the sea

under all its aspects calm or furious, sad or exciting, and that has been able to express what he felt with all the purity and truth that characterizes him. How far away he is from his compatriot, Louis Meyer, who paint little marines, for boudoirs, in the style of Gudin.



This sea that Mesdag paints with its peculiar gray tones, is sometime, criticised by those who only know the waves from the shores of the atlantic or the mediterranean, where the waters do not wash against chalky cliffs or reflect the heavy leaden tones of gray northern skies. The waves of these northern seas do not have the purity of the atlantic billows for these reasons and

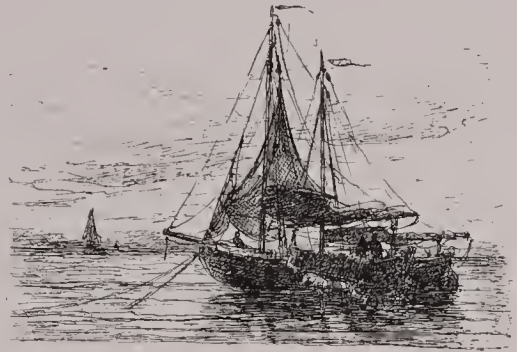
the coloring of the waves in Mesdag's pictures is not peculiar to himself but rather it is because he is so faithful in his reproductions from nature if some of the american critics would cross the Ocean they would praise,

instead of blaming as they often do, the painters of "Chalky waters" as they have termed the artists who frequent the Holland coast and the English channel.

To a painter who has never made studies of the sea the motion of the waves their ebb and flow and their breaking upon the shore seem a much greater mystery than the formation of rolling clouds or the brilliant sunset tints and if he be a figure painter he will hesitate, before attacking a subject with an agitated sea background, and try to learn the trick of rendering waves from some marine artist instead of going direct to master nature. A painter of one of the well known pictures of Venus of modern times wished to represent this famous beauty reposing upon the crest of a wave but as she was to be represented life size the wave must be modelled and painted true to watery life. As this painter's studies had been mostly within the walls of inland cities he knew nothing of the sea and the trick of painting the crest of the waves he wished for, so he applied to a brother artist whose marines are famous for their brilliant coloring and harmonious skies, clear waters and brilliant adriatic sails. This friend showed him sketches of fine bits of color and rippling, sparkling waves but nothing that could satisfy a painter who wished a background for a life size Venus. Then the painter applied to second confrère whose marines are known for their tender gray qualities, qualities of tone more appropriate as a background for flesh



tints than the more brilliant tones of the former. But again he was not successful for the waves of this friend's sketches were always calm and would only make a cradle for his Venus. In despair the painter was obliged to make a journey to the sea-shore to study the Ocean with his own eyes, as he was unable to make use of those of his friends, and make his own studies. When he first arrived at the sea-shore the water was as calm as that of the lake in the bois de Boulogne, and the ripples along the shore were not as large as those made by the little steamboats the ply up and



down the Seine he knew so well, and that had become his ideal of mighty waters. For a parisian looks upon the Seine as all sufficient for pleasure and seaside; I remember an exile writing from London when he had been for some months. "I was so down-hearted yesterday amidst this fog and these unsympathetic people I am sure, as I stood upon the bridge and looked over the railing on to the river, if it had not been the



Thames but the Seine that I knew so well I should have thrown myself into its running waters. " But to return to our painter who began to regret he had ever attempted his venus upon the sea and began to have ideas of repacking his valise and returning to Paris and changing his picture to the usual goddess floating on a cloud, clouds that might be studied from the steam of a tea-kettle upon the cosy home fire, when the wind blew, the waves rose and began to roll in from the

atlantie in long lines advancing and retreating, as the poet has expressed it, like soldiers marching up, delivering their fire and then retreating in regular order; along the shore came the rolling waves curving and breaking in fine lines and with foaming white crests, relieved by green delicate



transparencies under them that would be in perfect harmony with the delicate flesh tints of the goddess.

How should these waves be painted was now the question with their ever changing forms and tints, to commit these forms to memory seemed impossible and so the artist getting a quiet sheltered corner low down



amongst the rocks with much hesitation and fear for he thought he had an almost insurmountably difficult study before him, laid out his materials for work, and with chalk in hand for some kind of outline to commence upon began to study the waves. When what

was his surprise and delight, as he afterwards declared, to discover "that the waves one after another always did the same thing" and he was some enabled to catch the "trick" of nature and the result was the famous picture of the birth of Venus.

Mesdag possesses that something which in so many painters is wanting but which is the completion of every great artist : style; the style that Thoré so well defined as : « The original, exact and complete manner of feeling and expressing the characters and forms of the beings or objects that are to be represented. » That style which is inherent in all great personalities.

With style each painter brings his own individuality, and each paints the Ocean as he sees it and as it impresses its grandeur upon him. Some are only influenced by its stormy character and delight to render it upon canvas in its most tempestuous move-



ments with darkly reflected sky, while others, like Stevens bring back from their summer sojourn at the seaside many souvenirs of a calm summer sea with the qualities and delicate shades upon its placid surface that may be found in the satin and silk stuffs he delights to render in his parisian winter studies. For painting the sea much resembles painting portraits; each day

like each face may wear a different expression but the quality which gives it life and animation is the same to the artist who has made serious studies and in painting each he gives them all their own but with his individual rendering, which stamps the work with the original manner of the master.

As an impressionist of the Ocean, Mesdag is infinitely superior to Courbet, and only Victor Hugo has seen and loved the sea as he has. Victor Hugo has sung all themes and Mesdag only the sea and yet his work is as great, as stirring as rich as the poet, for he also is a poet, this painter, like his friend and compatriot Israëls and shines, with the same brilliancy in the modern school of painting.

PH. ZILCKEN.





## J.-L. GÉRÔME



Do you see that elegant horseman passing on the boulevard de Clichy ? He is firmly seated in the saddle and going at a nervous pace, sometimes he is followed by a fauve colored hound. Do not imagine that this elegant man with proud and manly air, clear glance and gray mustache is an army officer in citizen's dress. Salute him, for it is Gérôme, and if you have anything to communicate to him detain him now for he may leave town this evening for Italy, Spain or Egypt, and you will not see him again until he has achieved some new work: either a picture or a statue.

Léon Gérôme is sixty years of age, but it is difficult to believe that he has passed forty, for he has always a valiant air and is physically and morally upright and determined. In 1848, when the pupils of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts



had to elect a staff officer their choice fell upon Gérôme who performed the functions in a thoroughly military manner. A fine horseman, and clever sportsman, proud and chivalrous, he is an agreeable type of artist.

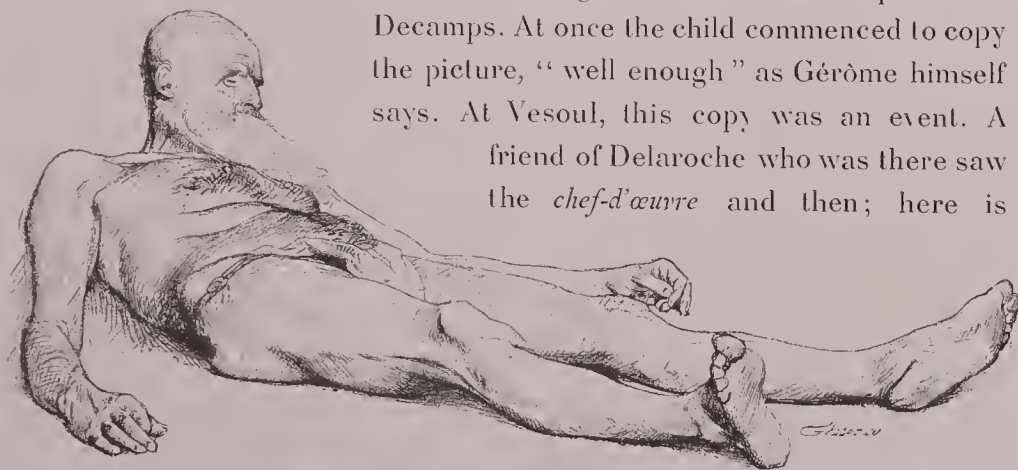
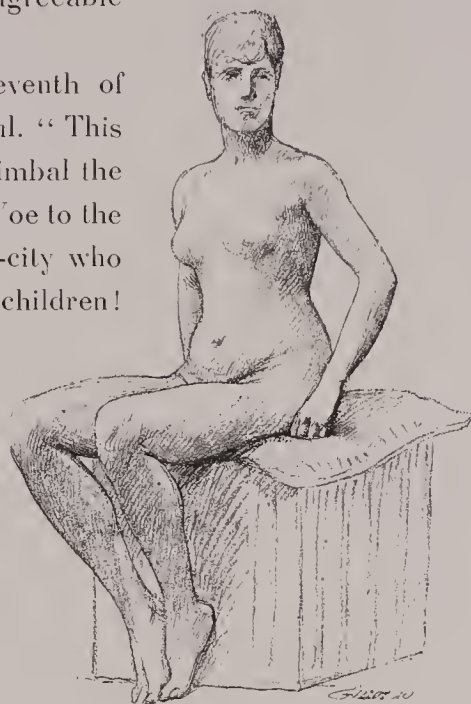
Léon Gérôme was born on the eleventh of May 1824, in the Haute-Saône, at Vesoul. "This was a first lucky chance" says his cousin Timbal the painter, and Timbal adds with reason: "Woe to the natives of Paris, the hard-hearted mother-city who abandons and who does not even know her children!

At Vesoul, Gérôme commenced his studies; an unequal mingling of latin, greek and drawing. In drawing he carried off all the prizes. Who would have taken notice of this at Paris? At Vesoul everyone was talking of the child prodigy. His father was a gold-smith and even in the provinces this is a trade that approaches art." On this account without doubt, as Timbal remarked,

there was a greater readiness to allow Gérôme to become an artist. Far from impeding his vocation his father bought him at Paris a box of colors

which he brought to Vesoul with a picture of Decamps. At once the child commenced to copy the picture, "well enough" as Gérôme himself says. At Vesoul, this copy was an event. A

friend of Delaroche who was there saw the *chef-d'œuvre* and then; here is

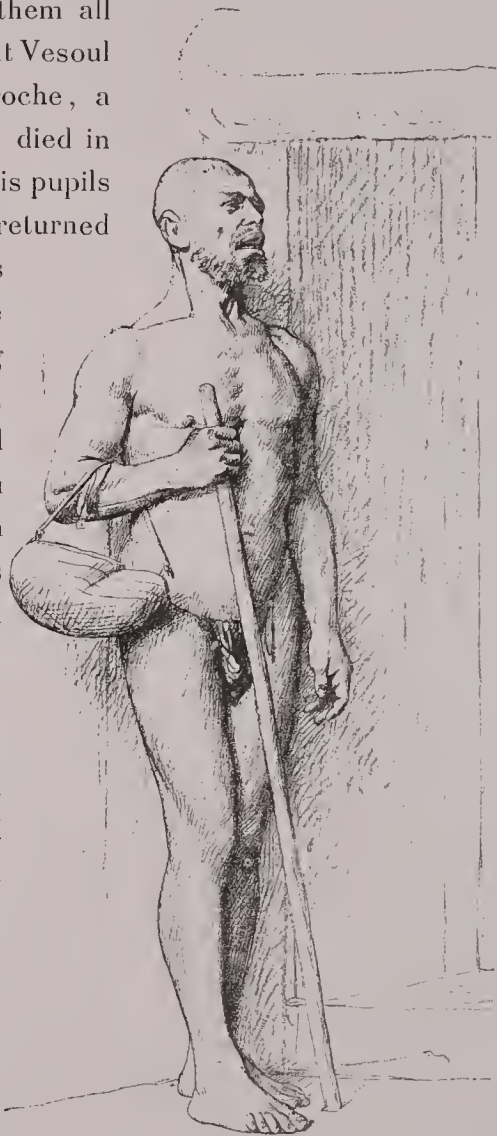


Gérôme starting for Paris with a letter from Delaroches' friend for the painter of the "Enfants d'Edouard". Not to mention twelve hundred francs that his father gave him. A fortune!

Gérôme entered the atelier of Paul Delaroche and remained there about three years. We have given, in speaking of Hamon, some details of the group of young men who were to be found there dreaming together of future glory. These *Souvenirs* of Hamon have made us acquainted with Picou, Damery, Jalabert and the hardest worker of them all Gérôme. One day while Gérôme was at Vesoul there occurred, at the atelier Delaroche, a horrible hazing of a new pupil, who died in consequence. The master dismissed his pupils and closed his atelier. When Gérôme returned from his home : “ Enter Drolling’s atelier, said Delaroche; I will not have any more pupils. Besides I am going to Italy.— And I, said the young man, I will not accept two masters, I will not enter the atelier of Drolling; you are going to Rome, I will go with you!” And when they left Gérôme was a little over eighteen years old. Timbal has recounted all these bygone times, from Gérôme’s own notes.

At Rome, the youth from Vesoul was at the same time enraptured and humiliated, he perceived that he did not know much. He studied and copied all things; the Forum, the Capitol, the temples, the passers-by and the landscapes. Then after some quick study made feverishly he would scratch out his work and say : “ What is so quickly done ought not to be worth anything! ” All Gérôme is there with his teaching, his resolution and his art.

On his return to Paris, he entered the atelier of Gleyre. Then he returned to Delaroche. He worked with his master on that “ Passage des Alpes par Charlemagne” that is to be seen at Versailles. He tried for the prize of Rome,

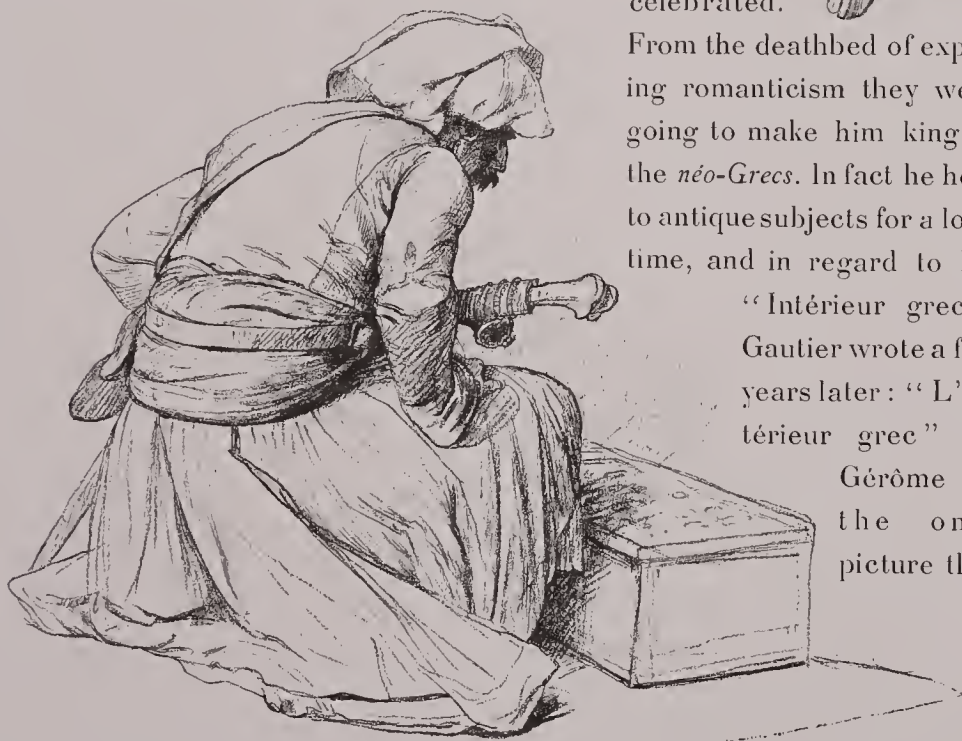
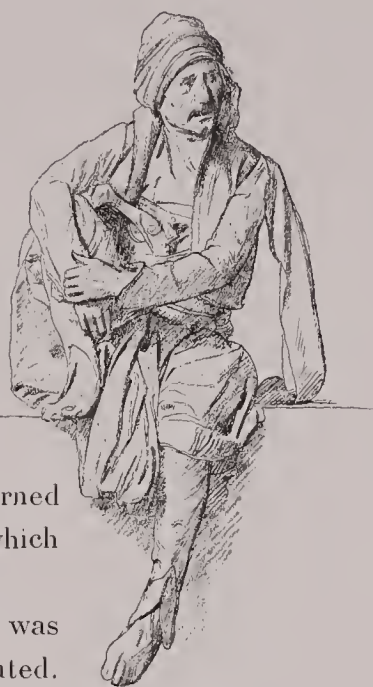


failed and commenced to paint two nude figures. It was the "Combat de coqs" his first triumph. Whilst he was executing it he said to Delaroche: "I try to paint honestly clinging to nature, but I am still unskilful; it is flat and thin." Yes, his master responded, you are right, but there is originality, and style, you will do better later; in the mean time do not be anxious; exhibit your picture!—Exhibit it?—It will do you honor."

"Greece is the fatherland of simplicity, Edmond About has written, in his *Voyage à travers l'Exposition des Beaux-Arts* (1855), he said of Gérôme: M. Gérôme was Greek from the outset because he was simple." Since then, two years afterwards, M. About warned Gérôme that he was turning to the Gérard Dow, which after all was not so disagreeable, it seems to me.

From the "Combat de coqs", J.-L. Gérôme was celebrated.

From the deathbed of expiring romanticism they were going to make him king of the *néo-Grecs*. In fact he held to antique subjects for a long time, and in regard to his "Intérieur grec", Gautier wrote a few years later: "L'Intérieur grec" of Gérôme is the only picture that



can be placed by the side of the "Stratonice" of Ingres, a little chef-d'œuvre of style, grace and science." And the author of *Fortunio* praised



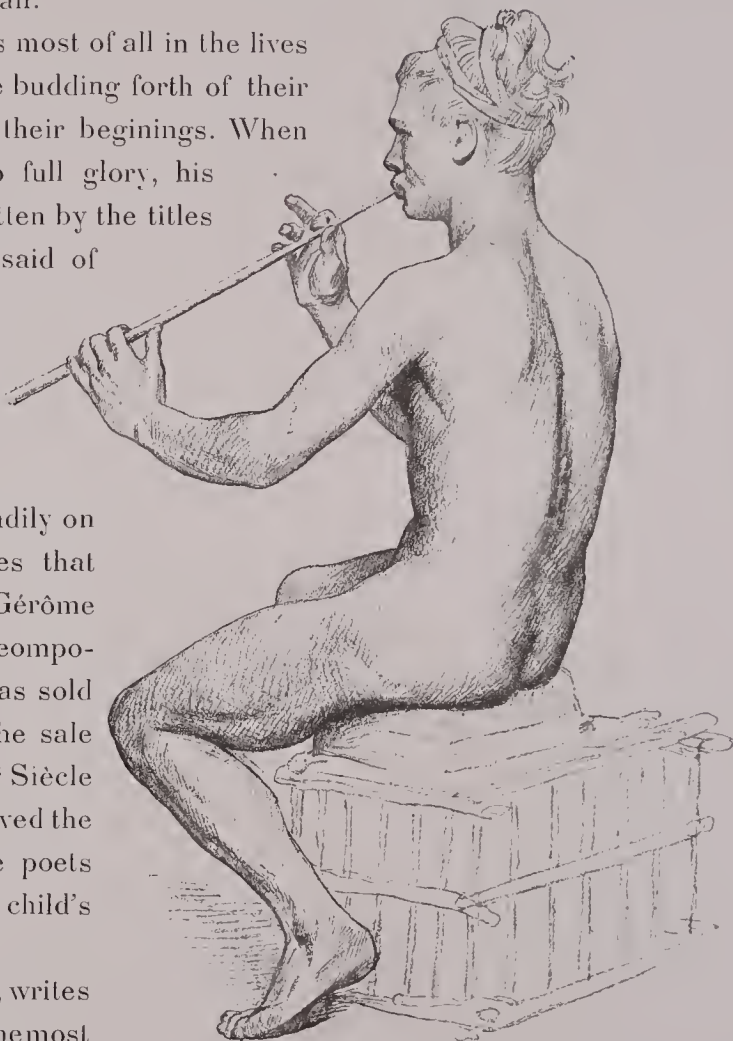
the painter for not having the jesuitism to call this interior a “*Marché d'esclaves*” or “*Captives exposées en vente*” believing that an art so chaste, sober and pure as his was sufficient to veil what such a subject might have that was dangerous. “*L'Intérieur grec*” was, in fact, one of those corners of the town where Messaline glides in eagerly under a pseudonymous of courtesan.

That which interest us most of all in the lives of illustrious people, is the budding forth of their talents, their origins and their beginnings. When an artist has entered into full glory, his biography can only be written by the titles of his works. It can be said of Gérôme that since 1847 he has been constantly struggling and has always shown himself upon the breach.

I shall dwell most readily on the souvenir of the pictures that I have seen. In 1855, Gérôme exhibited a magisterial composition a sketch of which was sold by auction at the time of the sale Victor Borré, it was the “*Siècle d'Auguste*”, where he showed the leaders of the people, the poets and warriors surrounding a child's crib.

“*Le Siècle d'Auguste*”, writes Gautier, will remain one of the most noted pictures of the Exhibition of 1855” and he adds that the canvas of Gérôme was not unworthy of the sublime page of Bossuet that had inspired it.

Alfred de Tanouarn (15 july 1860) thus describes this important work : “*This canvas which contains such fine portions reveals in the artist a superior mind, thorough study of the antique and a noble aspiration to again*



evoke the imposing ampleness of the old masters. The painter has endeavored to include on one vast canvas this splendid reign of Augustus which is the culminating point of pagan history. Civilisation having arrived at its apogee, will descend first slowly, then with a quickened movement into the obscurity of the middle ages, to soon be born again, under a new form.

“ This is the disposition of the picture : before the temple of Janus, Auguste is seated on a sort of throne that overlooks the scene. Near him is stationed a young man elegant and viril in form a symbolic image of the Genius of Rome. At the right of the prince are the political notabilities of the epoch; on his left the artists and poets. Farther away on the first steps of the temple lies the body of the assassinated Cæsar before whom Cassius and Brutus are standing erect the former holding a

poignard; opposite Cléopâtre and Antonio's dead bodies are thrown upon each other. Below on both sides of the scene, the conquered people seem to be adoring

the majesty of triumphant Rome. Finally, are seen the Infant Jésus, Mary and Joseph a mystic group that an angel covers with its wings.

“ This work is not exactly an historical picture : for several of the personages had never during their life been united in a mutual action, and Gérôme has had no hesitation in voluntarily

committing many anachronisms. Neither is it an allegory in the usual



sense of the word, for all the figures except two, that of the angel and of the Genius of Rome, belong to beings that have had on earth a real existence. It is an intermediate work between history and allegory of which the inimitable



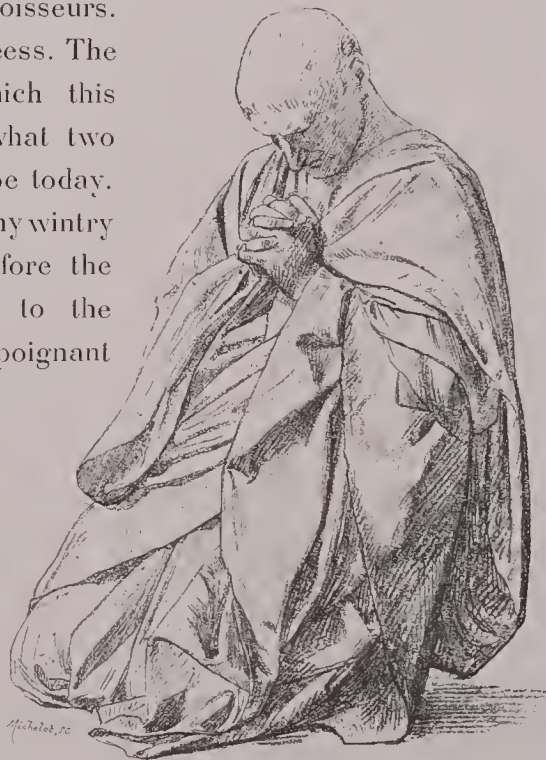
model is "l'Eeole d'Athènes" of Raphael. But here what sober luminousness! What wise harmony! What noble simplicity!"

"Le Duel de Pierrot", that can be seen at present in the magnificent collection of the due d'Aumale, at Chantilly, and that has lost nothing of its picturesque and dramatic qualities, did much to make Gérôme's name popular, that had until then been greeted only by refined connoisseurs.

This was an unprecedented success. The twenty thousand francs for which this little *cuadro* was sold was then what two hundred thousand francs would be today.

This desolate scene in a gloomy wintry landscape, this masquerade before the butchery this opera-ball leading to the deadhouse caused all the more poignant impression as the execution was so perfectly finished.

Gérôme delights in these historical or common-life tragedies like the author of "la Mort du due de Guise", his master, whom he has surpassed. He has by turns executed (this is not a play upon words) "César mort",

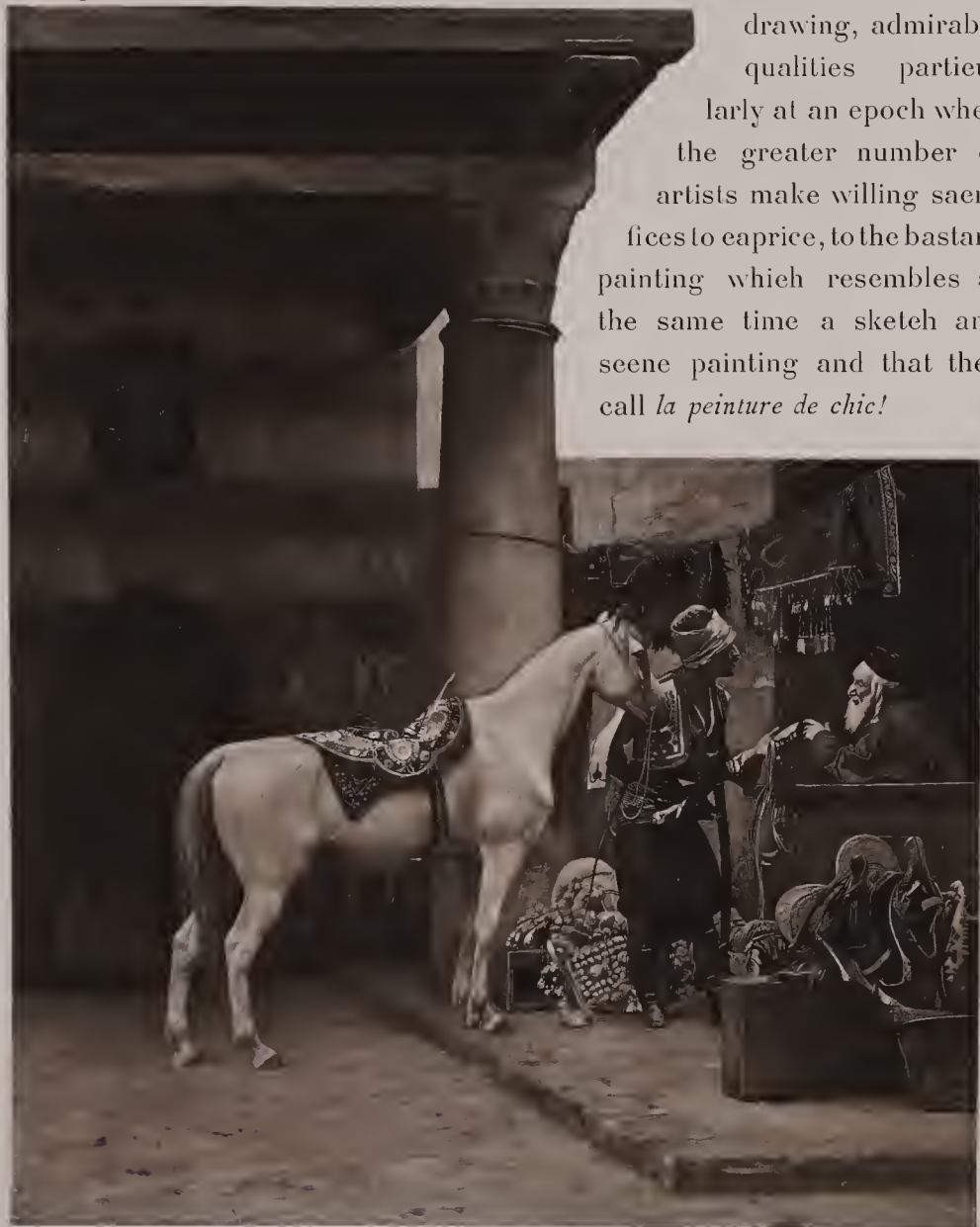


"le Maréchal Ney fusillé", and "le Calvaire", in the strange landscape of Jérusalem where on the burnt-rocks are seen the profile of the



shadows of the three crosses of the executed... But as an artist who does not like to repeat himself, but who prefers (an original thing in these days when each one specialises) new departures to recommencements, Gérôme has always, and always happily, varied his works. Each canvas of Gérôme resumes his talent and is a perfect whole. And, what strong determination and research what science, care and truthfulness in

drawing, admirable qualities particularly at an epoch when the greater number of artists make willing sacrifices to caprice, to the bastard painting which resembles at the same time a sketch and scene painting and that they call *la peinture de chic!*



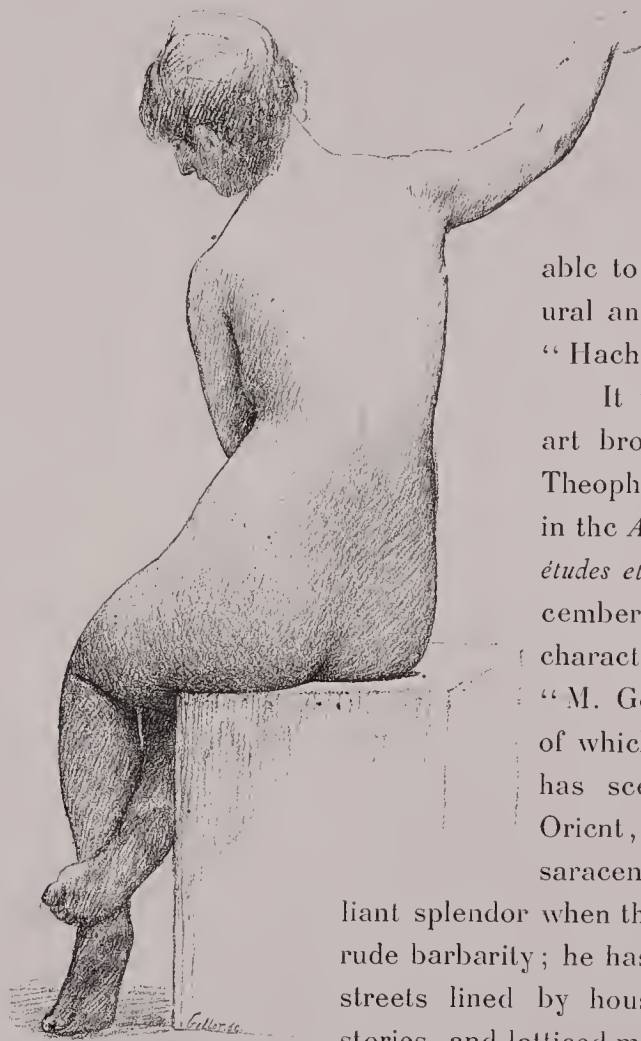
Photographie de Jean-Léon Gérôme & Co.







Gérôme is a traveller. In 1854, after having attached to his buttonhole the red ribbon that the "Siècle d'Auguste" procured for him he started for Egypt. A short stay at Constantinople had created in him the desire, and the Orient became his dream. "Probably, he wrote one day to a friend, among my ancestors a bohemian must have slipped in for I have a nomadic



tendency and the bump of locomotion!" He went to Egypt, to that Egypt where he would see his "Prisonnier" passing along the length of the Nile; and of which he would be

able to render so perfectly the agricultural and pastoral side in his Egyptian "Hache-paille".

It was in writing of the works of art brought back by the painter that Theophile Gautier, in a brilliant article in the *Artiste* entitled: *Gérôme, tableaux, études et croquis de voyage* (28<sup>th</sup> of December 1856), resumed thus, admirably characterizing the talent of Gérôme: "M. Gérôme has made the pilgrimage of which Th. Chassériau dreamed. He has seen Cairo, that capital of the Orient, that town of Caliphs where saracenic art burned with such a bril-

liant splendor when the Occident was still plunged in rude barbarity; he has wandered through its winding streets lined by houses, with overhanging upper stories, and latticed moucharabys shaded with stripp-

ed awnings and mats of braided broom, from whence shoot upwards delicate palms opening in the blue their fan of leaves, or some mosque's minaret encircled with bracelet-like balconies; he has followed that crowd which is composed of all the types of the east, from the Arab of noble race and the severe Wahabite to the negro with his coarse flat-nose; from the Arnaute with his eagle eye and nose to the placid fellah with a face like the

egyptian sphinx, this crowd that separates with many genuflections before the Bey's horse accompanied by his saïs, and who fall back against the wall so as not to touch the eadine as he passes like a phantom under the domino of his silken habbarah with its horse hair netting over the face, and who scold the negress who is burdened with a child in red tarbouch and gold embroidered vest.

“The young artist accompanied by some friends ascended the



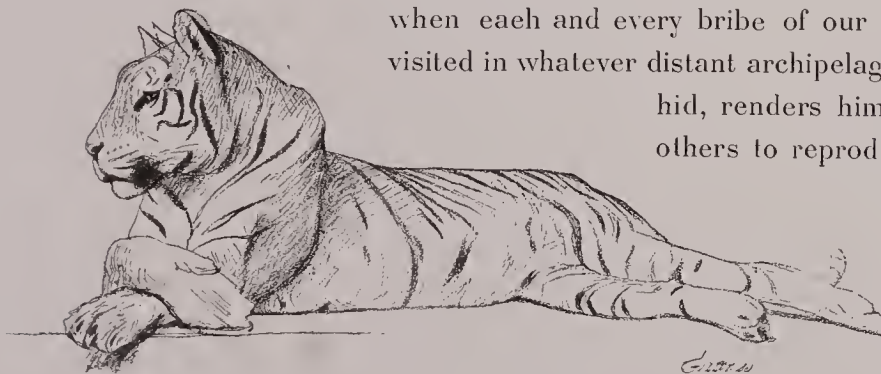
Nile in one of those eanges whose convenient and picturesque arrangements make travelling in Egypt a real pleasure trip. Photography, has been so perfected at present that the artist is exempt from copying monuments, by the absolute fidelity of its proofs; and the happy choiee of the best point of view and most favorable moment give them great value. So his earnest studies as an historical painter, his delicate and elegant talent as a draughtsman, exaet yet full of style, and a peeuliar sentiment, that we would willingly designate as ethnographie, and which is becoming more and more necessary to an artist in this period of universal and rapid locomotion;

when each and every bribe of our planet will be visited in whatever distant archipelago they may be

hid, renders him more fit than others to reproduce the simple

details, which have been neglected until

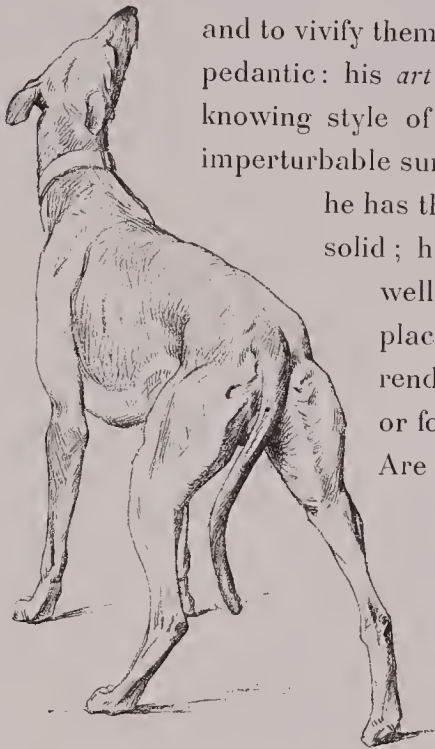
now, for landscape, move-



ment and eolor, by the modern explorers of the Orient: man!”

And in this same article Gautier adds, in reference to an antique painting by Gérôme: “ We will also mention a sketeh of “ Roi Candaule ” in bed, his wife Nyssia is plaeing her garments on a golden tripod, while Gygès through the cracks of the door regards this beauty without rival; but it is sufficient to have been indiscreet, it is not worth while to be a

coxcomb and become enamored of this antique fable, that has already inspired a statue by Pradier, and a picture by Gérôme."



Gérôme has the right to treat these antique subjects and to vivify them; he has great knowledge and is in nowise pedantic: his *art* resembles his person and mind; it is a knowing style of painting that is also amusing. With an imperturbable sureness of touch, he has taste, also I repeat

he has the desire for something new and nervously solid; he, a painter would say, makes pictures well, he composes, puts every thing in its place, enlarges his figures when the perspective renders them too small for the dramatic idea or for the sensation that he wishes to express.

Are there many pictures, in our french school, as complete and perfect as "Corneille et Molière" collaborating, as "Frédéric II" playing the flute at Sans-Souci, as the "Eminence grise" descending the staircase of the king's palace? History is living here, I may

say, evoked with a rare precision and power. It must have happened so.

At Gérôme's atelier, I have seen admirable pictures that the french public unfortunately have not been able to make acquaintance with, they leave so quickly for the galleries of American and dutch amateurs. Such as a "Charmeur" of serpents, a crouching lion regarding fixedly the sun that was named: "Deux

Majestés", a "Retour de Chasse", negroes bringing in a lion that they have just killed and that weighs

heavily on their bronze colored shoulders; a dutch cavalier in a many-colored and dazzling field of tulips; a "Vente d'esclaves", with as charming nude figures as the famous "Phryné".





But the list of Gérôme's works would fill pages of this publication. He has successively exhibited : " Jeunes Grecs excitant des Coqs " (1847); " La Vierge, l'Enfant Jésus et saint Jean "; " Anacréon "; " Bacchus et l'Amour " (1848); " Bacchus et l'Amour ivres ", " Intérieur grec ", " Souvenirs d'Italie " (1850); " Pæstum " (1852); " Idylle ", " Elude de Chien " (1853); " Gardeur de troupeaux ", " Pifferaro ", " Le Siècle d'Auguste et

la Naissance de Jésus-Christ ", a large historical canvas (1855); " La Sortie du bal masqué ", " Les Recrues égyptiennes ", " Memnon et Sésostris " (1857); " Cesar ave, Cesar imperator, morituri te salutant! ", " Le Roi Candaule " (1859); " Phryné devant le tribunal ", " Socrate vieux vient chercher Alcibiade chez Aspasia ", " Les deux Augures ", " Rembrandt faisant mordre une planche à l'eau-forte ", " Hache-paille égyptien ", " Portrait de Rachel " (1861); " Louis XIV et Molière ", " Le Prisonnier ", " Boucher ture à Jérusalem " (1863); " L'Almée ", " Un portrait " (1864); " Réception des Ambassadeurs siamois au palais de Fontainebleau ",



" La Prière " (1865); " Cléopâtre et César ", " Porte de la mosquée El Assaneyn au Caire " (1866); " La mort de César ", " Arnautes jouant aux échecs " (1867); " Le Sept Décembre 1815 ", " Jérusalem " (1868); " Marchand ambulant au Caire ", " Promenade du Harem " (1869). He painted in one of the chapels of the Church Saint-Séverin, at Paris, " La Peste de Murillo " and " La mort de saint Gérôme "; and in the library of the Arts-et-Métiers (that was formerly the refectory of Saint-Martin-des-Champs), the heads of " Saint Martin coupant son manteau ".

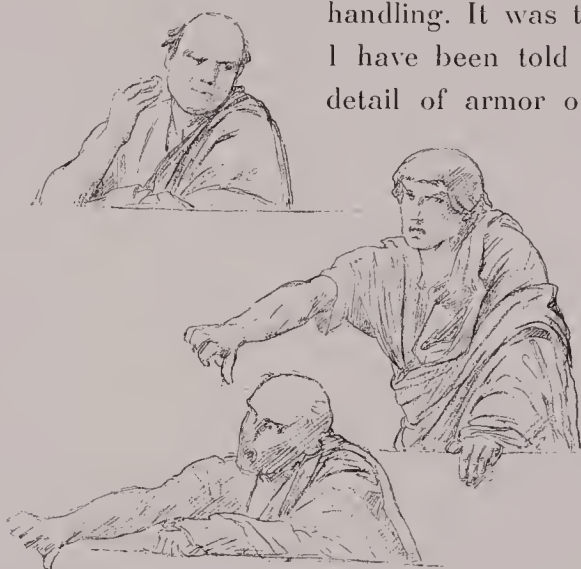
It was at the close of the Salon of 1874 that M. Gérôme obtained

the grande medaille; it was his hour of absolute mastership. Since then Gérôme has reserved for those who appreciate the best his rare talent new surprises, and so it was that in visiting the universal Exhibition of 1878, we greeted him as a sculptor. Yes, the same hand that handled the painters brush with such delicacy had now modeled clay in big masses, and beside his numerous and always most interesting works, all carefully finished in that smooth manner that sometimes suggested painting on china, but was always powerful and masterly. Gérôme offered to the public an admirable group, and this combat of "Gladiateurs" that M. Gérôme exhibited as a sculptor obtained great praise for its powerful and manly

handling. It was the work of a savant and an artist.

I have been told that when he failed to find any detail of armor or costume that was necessary to

finish his work M. Gérôme would leave the boulevard de Clichy, for the Naples museum, make sketches there of what he needed and returning to his atelier by the express train continue his labor, and reinstall himself before his group in clay, that had not had time to harden during this rapid journey to Italy. M. Gérôme is an artist, I desire to repeat,



whom his confreres hold in high respect for his noble and severe conscientiousness in art in this period of irritating facility and of haphazard art.

After being presented five times to the Académie des Beaux-Arts, Gérôme was elected, not without difficulty, notwithstanding his rare qualities as an artist, man and professor. He was defeated the fourth time, by Hesse, and having accepted the position of professor at the School des Beaux-Arts he had to allow H. Lehmann and Ch. L. Muller to pass before him. In the end he was nominated without any concessions on his part.

M. de Tanouarn, whom I have already cited, said twenty four years ago "it is a vigorous and energetic nature; endowed with a wonderful force of will and an indefatigable activity. He carries on at the same

time several works without mingling or confusing them. Gérôme changes his occupation from one kind of work to another to rest himself. Though he has travelled much that has not prevented his producing a great deal. In a word it seems that for him the hours are multiplied and lengthened, whilst for others they vanish away while they are considering how to employ them.

So Gérôme remains at sixty years of age the same as he was at thirty-six : as youthful, vigorous, active and wiry, as full of life and sympathetic. An agreeable, gay talker, pensive notwithstanding his good humor, respectful of his art, frank and loyal, adored by his pupils, he is the professor who teaches the young those rare and neglected virtues : simplicity, study and labor. In a word he is a noble example of what a master-painter of the nineteenth century may be : an artistic soul with a soldier's temperament, a heart of gold in an iron body.

JULES CLARETIE.







## M. MUNKACSY



Although Munkacsy is in the full force of his talent and manhood, in this year of grace, 1884, it is hard to believe that he belongs to our prosaic epoch. Morally as well as physically he is of another century; of an age of chivalry, of faith and freedom in art. The more I consider the man, the closer I study his works the more this anachronism strikes me. When Munkacsy puts on an english cut jacket, a frock or a dress coat the costume does not suit him, his visage demands more picturesque, ampler, and more sumptuous garments.

The powerful skull from which the unmanageable locks stand straight up, the jutting out of the vigorous prominences of the brow, the soft, fine eyes that dream, not without a malicious sparkle, in the shadow of arched brows, a solidly planted nose, full beard and thick mustache, the points proudly spread

fanshape; these features taken as a whole form a marked type of the oriental european, that seems to demand the princely elegance of the old magyars; the fur cape decorated with precious stones and enchanced with egrets, the dolman of golden brocade and silken sashes from which hangs a curved sabre stripped in a skirmish from some conquered kalife. To dress Munkacsy differently is nonsensical. His figure, expression and gait protest against our meagre stuffs, thinly woven in an economic mixture of cotton and wool, meanly cut by tailors who no longer know how to drape the human form.



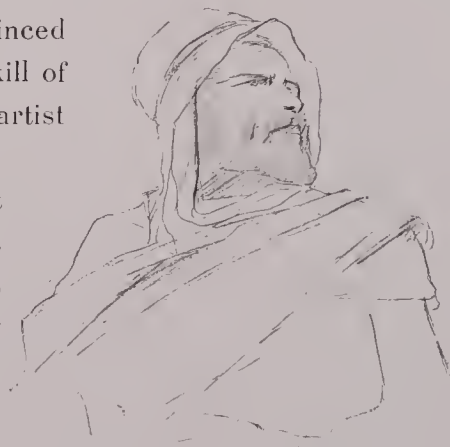
Nor is the manner, in which Munkacsy understands and practices the art of painting of our time. At present, and we deplore the fact, the ateliers of painters, with a few rare exceptions, have the style of manufactories, of industrial establishments or shops. The sharpest mercantile spirit reigns there despotically. They work at the trade and not for art. They pursue a single and mean end : gain. They are neither more nor less than manufacturers of parisian novelties and as such slaves to fashion. They are no longer preoccupied to do well nor to make something beautiful they have but one object in view : a good sale. The artist or at least he who bears unworthily this proud title abdicates and places himself in the hands of the broker. He takes the dealer as his inspirer and guide, and obeys when it is he who should impose his will and make his taste triumphant. He is only a meehanic, working by the pieee and by order, executing all the silly

combinations that the amateur conceives, stifling his genius in a labor without attraction or glory, always recommencing the same picture and imprisoning his thoughts between the walls of his cash box.



The hungarian master has known how to resist this terrible commercial current. He sell his canvases, indeed he sell them very dear; but he composes and executes them with his mind free from all preoccupations foreign to art. Free from all servitude, independant of all coteries, he is not bound by fashion's caprice nor by the yoke of a speciality. His goal remains elevated; he lives in the domain of great and noble ideas, and his only anxiety is to give to his work the double charm of beauty of form and of thought. He at least does not belong to the

disheartening school of those who deny the ideal because their imagination is arid and withered. He believes that a painter can be and ought to be a poet; he is convinced that art does not consist simply in the skill of the hand, finally he knows that the artist should be not only master of his handicraft but more he should give the best of his heart and soul to the works that he creates. The secret of his talent is here, it is the constant union of a very personal workmanship and an elevated sentiment.



Munkacsy's sentiment became refined at an early age in the midst of the terrible ordeals that occurred during his early years. I do not think a more tormented or sorrowful childhood



can be found than that of the little Miska. Miska is the pet name for Michael, it is one of the pretty caressing names that mothers murmur about white cradles; one of those names that is made very short like the little beings to whom they are given, and who seem to concentrate by



their smallness a greater degree of tenderness and love. Munkacsy did not have the happiness of hearing himself so called by her to whom he owed his life. His mother died soon after his birth, mother's kisses on his brow were an unknown joy. And other misfortunes soon came upon him.

The father of Miska was a state functionary at Munkacs when the movement of 1848 broke out. A man who had all the shining and seductive qualities of imagination with all the defects of those natures that are quick and sensitive, a man in whom seemed to be incarnate the desperately proud genius of the magyar race, Kossuth made an appeal to the national honor, courage and dignity of the hungarian people. His ardent call greatly moved all hearts.

The father of Munkacsy, dazzled by the dream of greatness and independance that Kossuth promised his native land, found in those ardent improvisations the echo of his secret thoughts and was one of the first to cry: "Elien Kossuth!" He belonged to those who are before their time. They arrested him and he was thrown into prison. He became ill there, and died in jail. He left five sons and a daughter without any fortune.

These poor orphans were not yet abandoned by Providence. They had five uncles or aunts who adopted them at once. The richest relative received the little Miska and his sister. The child here found a second mother and it seemed as if his life would now become pleasanter, quieter more encompassed with caresses, but it was not so, an implacable fatality was excited against

him. When a people rises for a great idea, the good elements are not alone



in movement; the dregs of the people rise and are agitated also, whilst the good citizens went to the front with Kossuth, Bem and Dembinski, bands of scoundrels profited by the situation to organise and arm themselves and to devote themselves to crime with impunity. One night the house in which Miska's aunt lived was surrounded, the wretches entered by force, cut the throat of the unfortunate woman who opposed their designs, took possession of all that she possessed of value, and retired leaving Miska and his sister, orphans for the second time; crying by the corpse of their second mother.

Then

Munkacsy found shelter with his uncle Reök.

Uncle Reök, gravely compromised in the political movement, had had his property confiscated. He had for his support and to provide for his children and nephew but the meagre receipts of his profession of barrister, the unfavorable experience that he had passed through of the instability of fortune had served to rally him to the philosophical principles of Bias. He esteemed that the surest riches that one might possess were those that are to be found in the brains or the arms.

The smallness of his resources did not permit him to give his nephew the advantage of either a literary or scientific instruction, so he decided to have him learn a trade.





intelligently and conscientiously labored, standing in the fleecy shavings in the midst of uneducated and coarse workmen, resisting the contagion of the artisan's vices, keeping himself worthy of his father and his uncle Reök and never forgetting the wise counsels of the latter. Belonging by birth to the educated class but thrown by the force of circumstances out of his true path, he kept himself, in spite of his rude toil and the dangers of a vicious neighborhood, a manly youth, proud of heart and upright in mind; he did not despair of the future, he had faith in his strength and in his youth, and he did not complain. When he felt discouraged and ready to succumb he repeated the popular song of old Hungary:

“Oh! why, why should I mourn as if there  
 “were no sorrows but mine?—Each being has he  
 “not his anxieties, — numerous anxieties?— Every man has he not also his

him a few books and warmly urged him to give to study all the leisure time his workbench allowed him. After a long time, the little Munkaesy ceased to be an apprentice and was promoted workman, he went to Arad to practice his trade. Wages were not high at that epoch or in that part of Europe. Miska gained just two florins and a half a week, four dollars a month; with this he must feed, lodge and clothe himself; by means of many privations, Munkaesy was able not only to live on these small wages but also to pursue his education. All day long in the workshop he





“ griefs to sing?—Where is he whose happiness has never been shattered?  
 “ Where is he who has never wept for grief? Where are the eyes that have  
 “ never shed tears?”

He knew many of these songs and at this time he commenced composing. Faithful to the system that he had adopted, every evening when the workshop was closed, Miska would seek out his school comrades of Arad who were friendly enough to become his professors. He worked with them and thus instructed himself. He read the national poets: Balapa, Erdosi, Zringi, Gyengyosi, Kahari and Faludi. He was enthusiastic in his admiration of the beautiful, also he felt that he was a poet and wrote winged verses.

Munkacsy still keeps, as a precious souvenir, a big copy book that he filled at this time with odes and industrial drawings, hard profiles of cornices and burning verses. However this double labor of artisan and artist which he valiantly pursued finished by wearing out the vigorous constitution of Miska, one cannot with impunity work day and night and deprive one self of necessary nourishment to buy books and paper, nor pass six months without eating warm food and leave the hearth constantly dark and cold, it is not possible for every one to imitate the poet Timodi who terminates his poem by these melancholy verses:

“ This was written in the chamber of the poor Timodi, who often blew upon his fingers, for the cold chilled his body.”

Munkacsy could not endure Timodi's regime, an intermittent fever, that allowed him one quiet day in every two, confined him to his bed. This was in 1861; his uncle Reök was commencing to recover from the blows that he had sustained; he now possessed some savings and he hastened to his nephew and brought him home to Gyula. This fortunate illness decided the destiny of Munkacsy. I have elsewhere told how the vocation of the painter was



suddenly revealed, it needed but a word to bring it into being. One day uncle Reök came into Michaels room. The fever having for the moment left him quiet, he had taken down from the wall an engraving and was amusing himself copying it. — “Would you like to be a painter?” his uncle asked laughingly.

“Yes”, answered Munkacsy.

Ten minutes after, his uncle Reök thought no more of what he had been saying. But Miska thought much about it. To be a painter! This idea became profoundly fixed in his mind. To be a painter! henceforth this was a goal that





Photogravure Coupin & Co





he would pursue with all his energy and by all means. At that time there was at Gyula a painter of portraits named Szamosy, a second class artist, but very intelligent and well educated. Munkacsy had seen him at his uncle's, he went to him and during his convalescence he worked near him with passion and desperation finding for the first time complete happiness in his study.

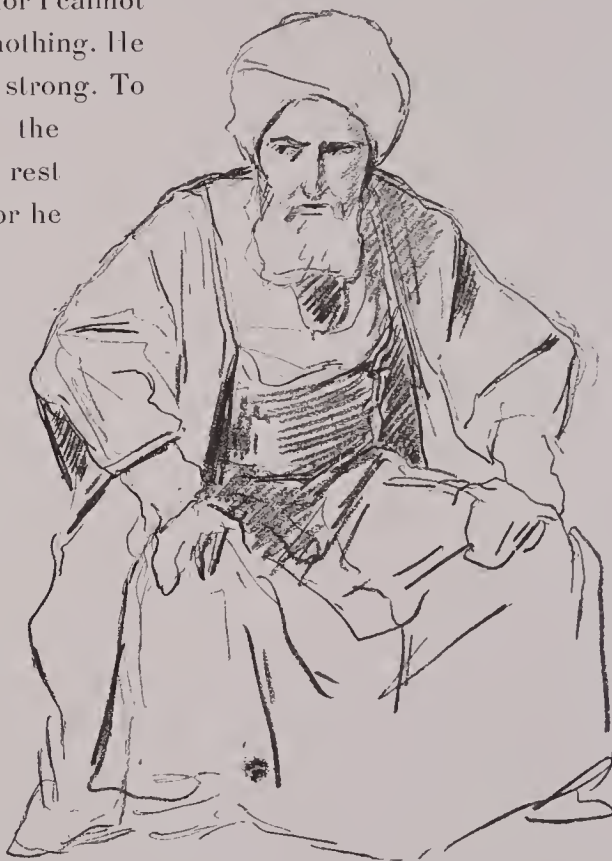
“Do whatever you will”, said he; “but you know what my position is still. So do not reckon upon me for I cannot help you”. Munkacsy asked for nothing. He felt so happy that it made him strong. To be allowed not to return to the joiners was all he asked, for the rest he would be able to manage for he needed so little, had he not lived on four dollars a month?

At last here he is a painter or at least a student of painting, and forever free from the tyranny of planes, — everything seemed delightful to him in the painting room of Gyula when he thought of the workshop at Arad.

Szamosy found in him a very docile and attentive pupil also a remarkably gifted one.

Soon the master was called to Arad to execute some portraits and Munkacsy followed him. He taught drawing to children and each lesson procured him a dinner. He gained a frockcoat, his first, at the point of his brush by painting the portraits of all the family of a tailor. He did not ask for money but he readily procured what was necessary to him by this process of exchange, he thus paid for everything by drawings or paintings.

Munkacsy profited wonderfully by these lessons. He commenced to compose pictures. They did not bring him their weight in gold, but the little he received was sufficient to support him and even to permit his undertaking



a journey, which was the necessary complement to his artistic education. Taking leave of his master the young painter went first to see his uncle and then on to Buda-Pesth. At this place he executed, in three months, a picture representing a scene in the interior of a peasant's house. The Society for the protection of Art purchased this canvas for eighty florins. This was a first success. A

second picture found a buyer at one hundred and thirty florins; never had Munkacsy felt himself so rich. He employed all this money to go and visit the museums at Vienna.

When he returned to Pesth, during the war of 1866, he was in the hospital six months with disease of the eyes. On leaving he counted up what was left of his little fortune. By searching carefully in all his pockets, he found himself the possessor of twenty florins.

It is enough to take me to Munich, he thought.

And he went to Munich, where the glory of the Museum and the celebrity of the Academy attracted him. This journey to Munich was very useful to the young artist. During the two years that he passed in this city, working a little at the Academy but oftener alone, Munkacsy commenced to get a glimpse of the truth.

He first ascertained that he was making no progress, that he did not realise all he felt and that his work was inferior to his thoughts and will. He





sought the cause of this and discovered, that until then the poet and philosopher had predominated in him. He had asked everything from his imagination and very little from models. His work was that of a dreamer and not that of a painter. The equilibrium between the idea and the form was wanting. Miska had sacrificed too much to the ideal and ignored nature.



The day that Munkacsy was convinced, that he had been mistaken until then, he changed his atelier, went from Munich to Dusseldorf and adopted an entirely new manner.

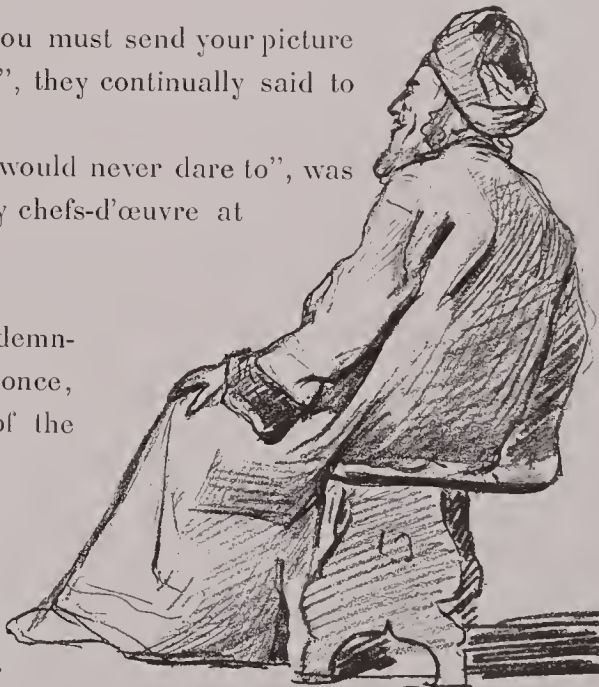
His first work was detestable, if we may believe him; the second was better. As to the third it is classed and celebrated; it is the "Condemned to death."

"You must send your picture to Paris", they continually said to him.

"I would never dare to", was his answer, "there are only chefs-d'œuvre at the Salon."

— Dare always."

The fact is that the "Condemned to death" obtained, at once, for its author, the esteem of the public and the praise of the critics. The rich, vigorous touch of the hungarian painter, the powerful clare-obscure in which he enveloped his personages, the qualities of sentiment and expression, the interest of the subject and the completeness of the composition were unanimously appreciated. It was understood that the author of that canvas had the stuff of a master in him and Paris, the host of so many artistic glories, called to Munkacsy to come.



He came as a friend to the country that was to consecrate his reputa-

tion, and he was not a stranger for during the terrible war of 1870, he had warmly manifested his sympathies for our soldiers confined at Dusseldorf; and he received a warm welcome. One of the first persons he met on his arrival at Paris, was colonel de B..., at present general, whom he had invited, in the time of captivity, to his evenings at home.

The colonel had retained as one of the pleasantest souvenirs of those sad days of 1870 the invitation card of Munkacsy, a card written out by col. Collignon and sent specially to Messrs. de Montaigu, de Puysegur, de

Gontaut-Biron, de Bixe... If the attitude of Munkacsy at Dusseldorf, during the war, caused him much german enmity, on the other side it gained for him warm and grateful sympathies.

"The Episode of the war of Hungary, 1848," a poignant return to his childish souvenirs, obtained at the Salon of 1873 a yet greater success than the "Condemned to death". The "Rôdeurs de nuit" and the "Mont-de-Piété" exhibited the next year, increased the reputation of the hungarian painter who sent to the Salon of 1875 his "Village hero" and to the Salon of 1876 an "Interior of his atelier" where it will be remembered that he represented himself in the scene of this picture.



Each one of his works was a step in advance towards mastership. Like all really strong artists, Munkacsy is modest and listens to criticism when

it is sincere ; he takes notice of the observations that are made and of the counsels that are given, and seeks to correct the faults that are pointed out to him.

In the early part of his artistic career he painted too much with black. "It is a Knaus perpetrated in a cellar!" exclaimed a critic before one of his canvases. The reproach was merited and the hungarian painter acknowledged that he was wrong in submerging his figures in obscurity ; and he sought to give more air and light whilst striving to preserve his warm tones, frank touch and largeness of composition. Little by little he transposed his scale, and in 1878 he exhibited a large and superb canvas,

worthy of all praise and of recompense. This picture: "Milton and his daughters" caused a sensation. In the midst of that enormous palace of iron and glass where all the nations had assembled together their choicest products, Munkacsy's work attracted every eye and acquired the admiration of all. The section of fine arts of Austria-Hungary owed to him an extraordinary relief. The hungarian painter, was hailed as master before all the universe, and received with gratitude the medal of honor, and the rosette of officier of the Legion d'honneur.

Encouraged by the triumph that this first, attempt gained for him he next made a more difficult effort and tried to write as a poet one of the great pages of christian poesy.

In 1881, the "Christ before Pilate" was terminated and shown to the public in the gallery of M. Sedelmeyer, rue de la Rochefoucauld.

In fact, it is a new Christ but conforming to christian spiritualism and to history that the hungarian painter has created. The emaciated type given to Jesus by the artist, is that of a human genius full of ideas and an apostle filled



with convictions of truth; as he advances towards a full knowledge of the cause, as the martyr of the morrow, a voluntary and glorious martyr about to give the supreme consecration by crucifixion to his word. Preacher of liberty, equality and love, he advances, calm in the midst of yells, to the tribunal where other than the interests of true justice reigns. He is surrounded by an agitated, insulting and hideous people.

The painter, renouncing the erroneous traditions of the spanish, italian and german schools, has restored to the crowd its costume and character. They are long bearded Hebrews and Arabs draped in their burnous that cry as much with their gestures as with their voices, the action is full of movement, the composition clear, the handling vigorous and powerful. No quality of sentiment or of expression is wanting in this masterly work, which is studied, with a constant preoccupation as to nature, as a whole and in all its details.



Exhibited successively at Pesth, Vienna, London and Manchester, "Christ before Pilate" was everywhere acclaimed. Munkacsy who was at this time travelling in Austria-Hungary, received the ovations of a sovereign and came back loaded with golden wreaths that the cities of his native land had had wrought in his honor.

There years later he finished the "Christ au Calvaire" which, with the "Christ devant Pilate", was exhibited at Sedelmeyer's gallery.

With these pictures and the preceding one Munkacsy has entered while living into full glory. He has raised up an art that in other times was powerful: religious art that dominated over so many centuries. It will be said of him that he is the master of the christian painting of the nineteenth century.

SAINT-JUIRS





## CHARLES JACQUE



That Voltaire retained until the end of his life such wonderful freshness no longer astonishes me; for I have just seen, in the atelier of Charles Jacque, the last etching the master has produced, a large plate of *Daphnis and Chloe*, and I came away fascinated by the juvenility of this work. It is as young, seductive and charming as a page by Longus. But *Daphnis and Chloe* no longer speak in the soft language of Amyot, they are dressed, she in the costume of a french peasant maiden while he wears the shepherd's smock-frock, but they are passing with their sheep through an idyllic landscape and are a vision not to be forgotten.

And the same can be said of the "Intérieur de bergerie" that the master

has just terminated, and a "Leda au homard", an artistic fantasy, where Jupiter assumes, instead of a swan's plumage, the carapace of a crustacea to captivate the most enchanting of women. All these are fresh, savoury and vibrating with a life that attracts. Never has Jacque's graver shown more power and grace, and notwithstanding, that Charles Jacque has not the same number of years that Voltaire returning to Paris had, Charles Jacque is seventy years old. But I repeat that he is always twenty.



He is a Parisian. Parisian by blood and to his finger tips, Parisian in thought and in soul. Born in Paris the twenty third of May 1813, near the Invalides, Charles-Emile Jacque was reared amongst quiet citizens who occupied themselves somewhat with painting, the bourgeois painting of that time. On leaving college, where he but made an appearance, he was entered in a notary's office, but he left there quickly and commenced copying lithographs, among others of the landscapist Cognet, that M. Boisselier, a friend of M. Jacque his father, considered very good, "very good indeed".

Jacque continued to copy, then they placed him in apprenticeship then, on the morrow of the revolution of 1830, he enlisted in the 52<sup>d</sup> line infantry, where he remained five years, making many studies and sketches during the period of his service. I have seen of Charles Jacque the soldier, a curious and precious watercolor representing all the officers of the infantry company to which Jacque belonged.

There is here a power of caricatural imagination of the highest order. And Charles Baudelaire has written on *Charles Jacque caricaturist* an exquisite and profound page. It is in this order of ideas, in the work of Jacque, that should be included a certain collection called *Militairiana* and *l'Histoire de La Ramee, ex-fusilier de l'armée française, depuis son entrée au service et avant jusqu'à sa mort et après, racontée et dessinée par Ch. Jacque, ex-caporal au 52<sup>e</sup> de ligne*, another fantasy extremely rare to day and published by Aubert in the Musée Philippon.

Charles Jacque was a soldier on furlough wearing the uniform when he



made his debut as an illustrator. He first carried his drawings to Henriot, an editor and bookseller, rue Neuve-Saint-Marc, who paid for them, or rather who was to pay for them, at the rate of a franc apiece but they were never paid for. Then Charles Jacque was put in communication with Best who commenced to employ him on the *Magasin Pittoresque* and gave him ten francs a drawing — a fortune!

One of Charles Jacque titles in the estimation of bibliophiles is that he has done much towards the glory of illustrated books of the nineteenth century, works that contain wood-engravings or etchings by him are eagerly sought for and sell dear today; the *Fables* of Lachambaudie are only sought for when they can be found in the edition of J. Bry which contains the unique but adorable etching of Charles Jacque: *l'Attelage*. Lovers of books esteem very highly this master.

In 1859, for example, Charles Jacque exhibited, passage des Panoramas, at M. Couteaux, his *Oeuvre gravée*, and a competent critic, evidently a bibliophile, wrote in the *Bulletin du Bibliophile* of Téchener, that this reunion of engravings had “figured among the choicest pleasures of the



parisian public”. Then they were not so accustomed to exhibitions. And besides have many as remarkable and peculiar been seen here? The catalogue of Charles Jacque mentions no less than three hundred and fifty three pieces, some of which repeated in different stages, carries to eight hundred and three the total number of works exhibited. It was like the entire life of a master-engraver spread out before the public gaze. The success was

very great. "The piece the most important of the exhibition, as much by its size as by the work, was an *Intérieur de ferme*, this plate that was both harmonious and solid has become extremely rare, and is worth a good sum when found." The *Bulletin du Bibliophile* greets the esteemed engraver and also the artist who has collaborated to the most admirable publications of modern book publishing : the *Jardin des Plantes*, the *Keepsake*, the *Pléiade* of Curmer, the *Bretagne*, the *Walter Scott* and who has filled his book the *Poulailler* with such fine wood engravings. "The critic says a bibliophile is always an *iconophile*, and he bows consequently, before this admirable maker of images."



We left Charles Jacque at the beginning of his career. In 1836 he went to England where he was called upon to work for different publications. He had been discharged from the service since 1835. He worked while in England on a Shakspeare that I have searched for in vain, and published a *Dance of Death*, "that ought not to be bad," he says in speaking of it, but of which his hasty departure from London prevented his seeing a proof. Here is a bibliographic rarity as tempting and as difficult to find as is the *Dame aux Camélias*, a spanish translation, the Barcelona edition, illustrated by Fortuny.

On his return from London where he had lived twenty months, and where the english artists had shown themselves disturbed by this rival



that had arrived from France, Charles Jacque took part in that magnificent illustration of *Paul et Virginie* that honors our time. The exquisite land-



scapes at once delicate and large of Charles Jacque, equal in value in this edition the marvelous little vignettes of Meissonier in the *Chaumière Indienne*.



There remains to be noticed in this period of Charles Jaeque's laborious life, drawings and engravings for the *Contes de Perrault*, for the *Français peints par eux-mêmes*, for the *Pléiade* of Curmer, the *Chansons de Béranger* for Perrotin, the *Bretagne illustrée* of W. Coquebert, and many other works.

And while thus working for the editors, Charles Jaeque commenced that quantity of etchings, where so many absolute chefs-d'œuvre are to be found of which M. J.-J. Guiffrey has arranged the catalogue, *l'Œuvre de Charles Jaeque; eaux-fortes et pointes sèches*. This catalogue was M. Guiffrey's idea and it was when he asked Jaeque for indications of his work that in showing

the contents of his portfolios to the author Jaeque took the occasion to nearly complete this wonderful collection of engravings. This catalogue has now been completed by a pamphlet that was published by Jouaust and Sigaux under the title : *Nouvelles eaux-fortes et pointes sèches de Charles*



devoted to Charles Jaeque engraver. In this study of Charles Blanc there are many contestable points for example the page otherwise serious where the critic believes it necessary to defend Jaeque for having seemed to be an imitator of Millet. All who are acquainted with art-history

Jaque (1884); supplément au catalogue dressé par J. - J. Guiffrey. M. Guiffrey had the excellent idea to preface his catalogue of *l'Œuvre de Charles Jaeque*, by the study Charles Blanc, in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* (February 15th 1861),

know that Charles Jacque was before J.-F. Millet in painting rural scenes of peasants, animals and farm-life. It is not too audacious to say that the penetrating and acute intelligence of Charles Jacque probably had its effect on the mind of Millet, his neighbor at Barbizon.

It was in 1845 that Charles Jacque commenced painting. Illustrating had given him a subsistence; painting was to give him glory. He worked on until about 1850, mingling his pictures with other kinds of work, until gradually the little "Poulaillers" and "Porcheries" of this admirable



animal painter commenced to have a value, in the eyes of amateurs, as they had always had in the eyes of artists. About 1855, after having struggled ardently to make his sheep acceptable, he was as it were penned in the fold with them, and the amateurs, who have such a desire to specialise artists, imposed upon him as an obligation that he should continue devoted to this specie of animal.

After 1870 the high prices that the master's work obtained, gave to a group of copyists and imitators the temptation and opportunity to flood with false *Charles Jacque* America, England, Belgium, and even France. It is however very

easy to recognise the touch of the master. The Charles Jacque have a considerable value which will yet increase; a venal value and an artistic value. This is a rather remarkable fact, that should I think, cause the blusterers, and painters always seeking to make a show and noise to reflect; for Charles Jacque without having followed the exhibitions, without being treated as a favorite by the press has gained an uncontested place amongst the ten artists most deservedly sought for and most highly quoted.

The critics have always greeted with sympathetic respect this great,

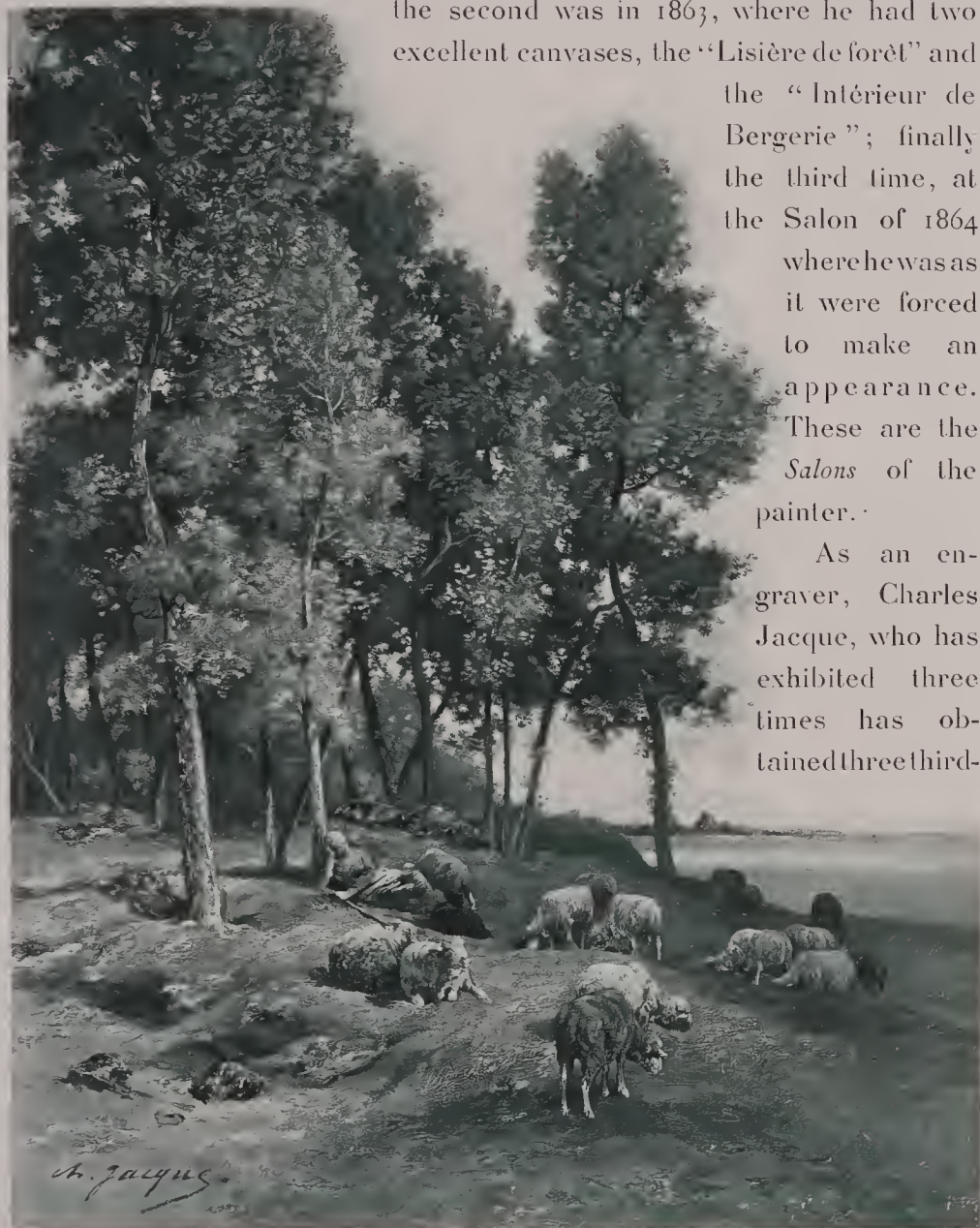
hard-working artist, but they have never overpraised him, as they have many others. Such an article as that by Edmond About, in the *Petit Journal* shows clearly Jacque's physiognomy at once delicate and proud. The author of the *Bergerie* has never exhibited but three times in the official Salons, the first time was in 1861, when he sent, with two other small pictures the superior canvas that is in the Luxembourg Museum;

the second was in 1863, where he had two excellent canvases, the "Lisière de forêt" and

the "Intérieur de Bergerie"; finally the third time, at the Salon of 1864 where he was as it were forced to make an appearance.

These are the *Salons* of the painter.

As an engraver, Charles Jacque, who has exhibited three times has obtained three third-







Wm. G. & Co. 1864



class medals, in 1849, 1861 and 1863. At the Universal Exhibition of 1867, he sent three cases of eaux-fortes, the *Bergerie* among others that gained him another third-class medal.

But the most incredible and ironical fact, in this glorious existence of an artist, is that medaled for painting in 1849, 1863 and 1864, — all third-class medals — Charles Jacque has obtained in all seven medals, of which not one, it seems incredible, has gone beyond the third class. He is without



doubt the only one among the painters and engravers who has received seven third-class medals. Certainly he would be justified in lightly valuing official recompenses; for he is superior to the highest. But the fact is no less to be noted that at a period when medals and crosses were showered upon mediocrities, Charles Jacque, by the initiative of M. de Nieuwerkerke, was decorated privately, on the sly as it were, forty-eight hours after the distribution of the recompenses of the Universal Exhibition of 1867. "My subversive ideas had separated me from the altar he smilingly said to me, so they made me take communion apart." So Jacque, one of the masters of the present time, one of the rare artistic personalities that will



outlive infatuations and fashions, only wears the simple ribbon of chevalier, whilst so many lesser lights in the numerous society of artists

are more medaled and decorated than Charles Jaeque. He laughs about it, it is true. His recompense is in his work itself, he paints for himself not for decorations. But it is for those who recompense artists who honor the art of the nation to which they belong to remember that justice ought be rendered and this master honored.

I speak of fame!... I repeat the word glory. Charles Jaeque taking life philosophically, for what it is, believes, with reason, that for the artist, — for artists who like him are sure of the future — what is most important is the approval of his own conscience. His principal judge should be his own sentiment, uninfluenced by the opinions of others or the clamors of notoriety.

A superior mind like his has necessarily a certain disdain for commonplace fame. He knows the cost of the struggle and the value of success. He sold in 1848 ten pictures for three hundred francs, now some of these canvases are worth thirty thousand.

He is neither a misanthrope nor stupidly self-conceited. He is simple, natural and finds life well rewarded. His ideas are very clear and sincere.

His is an ardent and decided temperament, working with a valiant ala-



erity, always at work, yet capable of becoming absorbed in a hobby like his manufactory of *old* gothic furniture. "He has drawn and had executed some bahuts and credences that are pure chefs-d'œuvre, worthy a place in the Cluny museum;" and his last passion is raising poultry that elicited such hearty commendation from George Sand, and cost him so dear.

It was at Barbizon, on the verge of the forest, that Jacque indulged in this passion. I find in the *Artiste* of 1856 in relation to the sojourn of Jacque at Barbizon this indication: "Charles Jacque who with Théodore Rousseau and Millet composes the colony of Barbizon, devotes all his attention at present to raising poultry not so much to fulfil his artistic instincts as to honor the *Société d'Acclimatation*, of which he is one of the most assiduous members."

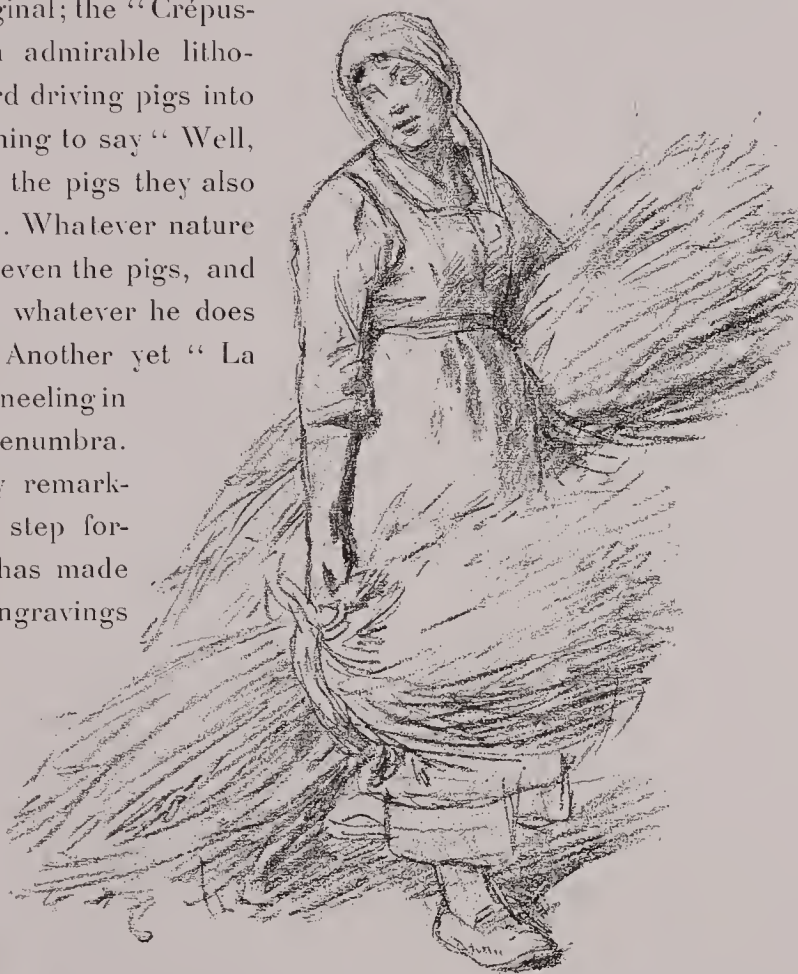
Charles Jacque who has written a slight sketch on the different kinds of engraving for the *Magasin pittoresque*, has also published a special book, "Le Poulailier", monograph of indigenous and exotic fowls, text and drawings by Ch. Jacque, wood engravings by Adrien Lavielle.

Although his painting does not suffer from his passion for his fowls, it nourishes them. Jacque worked a long time for his fowls. Now he works for





himself and his family. In turning over the pages of the *Artiste* I found some eaux-fortes of Jacque's early days. The "Travail rustique", with its strong, vigorous accent and healthy odor of nature, after Hobbema, the *Artiste* says: "M. Jacque has engraved Hobbema as he himself will be engraved;" then the "Pâturage flamand", fac-simile of Adrian Van den Velde, as limpid as they original; the "Crépuscule poétique" an admirable lithograph, a swineherd driving pigs into their pen and seeming to say "Well, yes, do not rail at the pigs they also have their poetry". Whatever nature does is well done even the pigs, and Jacque does well whatever he does particularly pigs. Another yet "La Prière" peasants kneeling in a rembrandt-like penumbra. All these are very remarkable; but what a step forward the master has made between these engravings and the last admirable serie of ten etchings, that Jacque has published already in an album (1881) and the delightful serie of six that



he has just published (1884). The time is long past when Charles Jacque gave for a few francs engravings that now sell at fabulous rates. "And remark that they are always the same" said the master engraver with his shrewd smile. "Only the amateurs pay fifteen hundred francs for what once were paid fifteen sous!" It is that justice has arrived and with her an uncontested and durable renown.

M. Giacomelli the friend and worthy admirer of Jacque should be careful not to forget these last engravings in the catalogue that he is, it seems, to publish



after M. Guiffrey. Alas ! If they can make a catalogue of the etchings, they cannot without forgetting many make a catalogue of the paintings that are dispersed about in Museums, in the Luxembourg, at Pau, at Angers and in private galleries. Last year at Angers I paused before that Charles Jacque which is called "Bœufs à l'Abrevoir". "A herdsman, holding in his left hand a stick drives a drove of cattle towards a watering-place." *Envoi de l'État* (1849), is M. H. Jouin's mention in the catalogue. The sky is superb ; the movement of the cattle, and of the man is full of beauty. Here is a naturalist who extracts from nature all the charm, power and picturesqueness that she contains !

Naturalist, I have called him and in fact he does work from nature. His admirable "Souricière" of rare vigor and powerful in color that was engraved for the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, was made, one day when as he was about to set the trap he found that the compartments were filled. And he immediately went to work, and so his pictures are made : he has had no other teacher than nature the great and immortal initiator.

And then Charles Jacque is a delicate clever writer, *pensive*, as Hugo says and at times a poet. He sometimes adds a quatrain in the style of Pibrac to his eaux-fortes like that below the "Souricière" — three mice taken, "an ironical engraving that the engraver has seasoned with a quatrain of high morality like — Charles Blanc says — to those that Israel composed in times of yore for Callot."



He is sure to live, he has branded with a hot iron the oak furniture that he has manufactured for the love of art, from wood a century old, and that he has had carved in byzantine figures that would put Du Sommerard Museum to shame. In the same way he has burnt his name in the artistic history of the time. As an engraver who will figure, in the future, beside Van den Velde, Ostade, Rembrandt and Pierre de Laer, Charles Jacque has taken his place in the first ranks of french art and how often in the future the amateurs, seeing again works now considered durable, will shrug their shoulders and says, returning to works more viril and simple, and solid as the earth itself: "Revenons à nos moutons... Let us return to the Charles Jacque !" Those are rare that are as living as the master and are as sure to survive.

Lately I was in his atelier, 73, boulevard de Clichy. At the side of his

painting atelier he has established an atelier for printing his engravings, and I was present at the working off of his last *Bergerie*. His two sons moistened the paper, pushed the plate under the press, and took it away with many precautions. "That must be retouched" said *Jacque*." And he bent over the proof, examining, studying it; and there between those two robust young men this delicate and active worker, this grand artist with his white-hair reminded me of those pictures of ancient masters so popular today. *Charles Jacque at home!* It was a home scene that was quite equal to those genre pictures where we see the engravers of olden times tracing with their graver on the plate that which is to render them immortal!

JULES CLARETIE.



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